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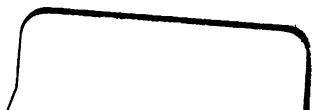
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RESTORED TO YOUTH.

RESTORED TO YOUTH

OR,

The Marbels of Anthropology.



A NOVEL.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS,
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RESTORED TO YOUTH.

Restored to Youth !—Ah me, what spell
Within those little words must dwell,
When syllabled by lips which tell
That Youth hath vanished !
What magic there for hearts which cling
Still to the joyous scenes of spring—
Oh, what despair those hearts must wring,
When from them banished !

Restored to Youth !—to Life's bright May !
Again to feel that blessed ray,
Love's sunshine on Youth's holyday,
How strange 't would seem !
Dear privilege of Youth resume
To welcome play where budding bloom
Sheds its first exquisite perfume ;
How sweet the dream !

Restored to Youth !—Is there a power
That can recall that happy hour,
When Life was bursting into flower ?
Is there, in truth ?
There is : Transfusion can erase
Each wrinkle from thy furrowed face,
And give the back the matchless grace
Of early Youth.

ERRATA.

**Book II., p. 162, line 12 ; for "Give back my Youth," read
" Restored to Youth."**

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.



Sapient persons having been deceived by the title of this work, into imagining the author aspired to the mantle which a certain eminent person, lately resident in Bond Street, and now residing in seclusion, *pro bono Publico*, had been obliged, under peculiar circumstances, to leave behind ; the writer hastens to assure the Public that Miss Diana Beauclerc (the heroine), is the only person whom he has ever “ Restored to Youth ;” and that notwithstanding the surprising success attending his first effort in that direction, he has resolved never again to resort to the delicate and hazardous operation of Transfusion.

Whether the operation could be brought to such a successful conclusion otherwise than on paper, he is unable to say ; and he must admit that nothing would induce him to try the merits of the system upon his own person.

The novel being intended to illustrate the principal curiosities of Anthropology, it would have been incomplete had the subject of Transfusion been omitted. It is proper to add that the writer has drawn his information chiefly from old papers, and that it is not unlikely the accounts of the extraordinary results following the singular operation may have been exaggerated ; they should therefore be received *cum grano salis*.

BOOK I.

“ON my love, my wife!
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty
Thou art not conquered ; beauty’s ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And Death’s pale flag is not advanced there.
Why art thou yet so fair ? shall I believe
That unsubstantial Death is amorous,
And that the base abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark, to be his paramour ?”

Romeo and Juliet.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMPACT.

“By this dread altar, you swear with me that she who dies first shall, if permitted, appear to the survivor whenever misfortune or death stands in the path ; and you call upon these relics of mortality to be witnesses to this solemn compact?”

“By this dread altar, I swear with you that she who dies first shall, if permitted, appear to the survivor whenever misfortune or death stands in the path ; and I call upon these relics of mortality to be witnesses to this solemn compact.”

When Bianca Mendoza had repeated these words after her friend Laura Peyton, she fancied the forms of the surrounding dead bowed their heads as if in token of acceptance of the post assigned to them.

The singular compact was probably the

morbid suggestion of the surrounding scene, which was one well calculated to fever the imagination of two young and romantic girls; for such were the speakers: it was a famous Capuchin Cemetery in the environs of Palermo, consisting of a large subterraneous space, divided into galleries, surrounded with niches for the reception of the dead after they had undergone a certain preparation with a view to secure their preservation from decay by the abstraction of the fluids. The bodies thus dried were supported in the niches by cords tied round the neck and shoulders, so as to cause them to maintain an erect posture; and as the features had been all more or less distorted, and the proportions altered from life, by the process of drying, they presented more the appearance of the horrid creations of a night-mare, than of human remains. More than two thousand of the niches were occupied by these ghastly tenants. Many of these had been standing there for ages, and time, despite the efforts made to stay his hand, had re-

duced them to the condition of naked skeletons. Some of the cords had yielded to decay, and the bodies had fallen into various grotesque attitudes, assuming postures expressive of entreaty, menace, prayer, warning, and various emotions. Previously to descending into this extraordinary scene, the attention of the visitors had been directed to the pictures upon each side of the door giving admission to the sepulchral vaults, the one representing the death of a good man the other that of a sinner whose dying moments are embittered by representations of the most appalling anticipations of a future state. Between these pictures there was a sonnet on mortal dissolution. The route then lay through four long galleries, having two rows of niches on each side filled with the mummies before described. On the way several coffins containing noblemen in court dresses were passed, and also the embalmed body of a King of Tunis who died in 1620.

Laura Peyton and Bianca, passing all these mementoes of death, had reached the

end of the great corridor, where stood an altar, the front of which was studded with human teeth, skulls and bones, inlaid in a sort of mosaic work, when the Capuchin who was acting as guide, suggested that the two ladies should remain there while he brought their brother, Don Pedro, to the oven in which the bodies were dried preparatory to being placed in their niches. This room, he said, was one which no woman could enter with safety; so appalling was the appearance presented by the bodies undergoing the preservative process, and so deadly was the atmosphere in the apartment, that the result of a visit on a delicate or susceptible organization might be fever or insanity. The girls said they would not be afraid to remain before the altar for a short time alone, and it was during this period that Miss Peyton made the extraordinary proposal to her friend which forms the subject of the opening paragraph in this chapter.

So wrapt in their subject were the girls, that the Capuchin and Don Pedro had re-

turned in time to hear the ratification of the compact.

“It is a rash vow,” said the Monk solemnly, “and will at some future time be heavily repented of.”

“I fear so too,” said Pedro. “Such an agreement was entered into between the Marquis of Rambouillet, elder brother of the Duchess of Montauries, and the Marquis of Reny, eldest son of the family of Nantouillet ; and the promise was only too well fulfilled. My dear girls, you have been very foolish.”

CHAPTER II.

THE PREDICTION.

The neighbouring clocks were striking the hour of midnight when Bianca Mendoza was awakened by some one drawing aside the curtains, and upon looking up, discovered, sitting upon the bed, the form of her friend, Laura Peyton. The face of the unexpected visitor was of a corpse-like pallor, the features fixed in such complete repose as rather to present the aspect of a person asleep or dead than of one waking or living. They were utterly devoid of expression, and not for a moment during the whole of the long interview which followed did they exhibit any emotion, or stir a hair's-breadth. The figure continued to regard Bianca steadily for some time, speaking not a word; and under the influence of a nameless terror,

the poor girl screamed aloud, and at last, finding the other seemed bent upon leaving her to open the conversation, summoned up courage to say, "For Heaven's sake, Laura, by what means, or for what purpose, came you hither at this time of night? Speak; or this horrid silence will drive me mad."

The form addressed as Laura heaved a deep sigh, but no corresponding wave of feeling was visible in the countenance; not a muscle stirred, the face preserving the same awful repose resembling death. Not even when she spoke did her lips move, the sounds glided out faint and hollow, as if the voice of one immured in a tomb were finding its way into the outer world through some interstice.

"Have you forgotten," was the response, "the solemn promise which we made to each other in the Cemetery of the Capuchin Convent, near Palermo, that whichever died first should, if permitted, watch over the other and appear whenever misfortune or death impended? I died last Tuesday

morning at four o'clock, and now present myself before you, in painful fulfilment of my rash and wicked vow, for the purpose of announcing that a terrible fate awaits you. You will marry the youth named Frederick Harcourt within six months; and at twelve o'clock upon the nuptial night, a trance so deep will seize upon you as completely to simulate death, and you will be shrouded, confined, and borne to the tomb."

"Just Heaven!" exclaimed Bianca, in her utter agony tearing her fair young bosom with her quivering hands, "is it decreed that I shall be buried alive? Can I do nothing to avert this dreadful fate?"

"Undoubtedly you may," replied the spectre. "You are a free agent, and may prevent it all by resisting every temptation to this marriage: but your passions are strong, you do not know their power; hitherto you have had no trial."

"I am a fool to mind you," said Bianca hysterically, starting up and striking herself violently, "this is nothing but a

horrid dream—a night-mare—I shall wake presently to laugh at my causeless terror. I have often had as vivid dreams before, and argued at the time that they could be nothing but a dream because they were so horrid, and I have awakened to find my reasoning was just. I have tried to awake myself as I am doing now, and failed—failed for a long time; but I did awake at last, thank God, as I shall do presently.” She renewed her exertions, tearing her body so violently that the blood flowed in torrents from the various wounds.

“This is no dream, poor girl,” said the phantom, with the same immovable face, and in the same hollow distant tones, “but a terrible reality, therefore do not injure yourself further. You may tear your body in pieces, but so long as consciousness remains, I will be with you until my time has come, which will be so soon as my mission is accomplished. Peace, peace, child; in a few minutes you will be released from my presence.”

“What evidence can you give me that you are really the spirit of the departed? When morning comes, I may persuade myself that you have been to me but the representation of a fevered imagination, unless you can give me some convincing proof of your real presence. Oh, convince me, for otherwise I may grow careless, in the belief that I have been the sport of fancy, and neglect to take those steps which must ensure my safety.”

“Your cousin Inez will arrive to-morrow with the news of my death, and you will find that my dissolution took place on the day and at the precise hour which I have indicated: will not that evidence of my supernatural knowledge convince you?”

“No, for it is possible for a person to have such a dream, and that dream accidentally come to pass. I must have some stronger proofs of the reality of your presence.”

“You shall,” said the phantom, and, at a wave of its hand, the heavy crimson

velvet curtains flew through the large iron hoop by which the tester of the bed was suspended, and remained in that position. "In that feat," continued the apparition, "you behold a development of supernatural power; no mortal arm could have performed it, and when you awake in the morning, and see the curtains thus caught up in the ring, you will have before you the evidence you require."

"It is not sufficient," returned Bianca; "sleeping we are often possessed of far more strength and skill than when awake; although waking I could not perform that feat, sleeping I might, and shall still doubt."

"Your doubts shall be removed," responded the phantom, taking up a small pocket book from an adjoining table, and with the pencil writing something upon one of the leaves. "Here I have written my name. In the morning when you observe my handwriting—which you know well—upon this page, you will have evidence of my real presence which cannot fail to convince."

"Still," said Bianca, "in the morning I shall doubt; for although waking I could not imitate your hand-writing, sleeping I might. More singular feats have often been performed in the state of somnambulism."

"You are hard of belief," said the phantom, in the same sepulchral tones, but more slowly and solemnly. "One only way is left to dispel for ever your scepticism, but it would injure you irreparably. Were I to lay my hand upon your wrist, the imprint of the fingers would remain as a blemish upon your fair skin to the last day of your life, an awful evidence of the reality of this visit. But it is not for spirits to touch mortal flesh, unless expressly invited to do so—and remember, the marks will be indelible."

"I pray you to do so," said Bianca with a courage born of despair. "Nothing less will convince me. I care not for any blemish which may result from the act."

"You are a woman of courage," said the spectre, moving close to her; "hold out your wrist."

She did so. A clammy hand clasped it. The embrace at the first touch was cold, but immediately after became burning hot; the spectral fingers seeming to be eating through the flesh into the bone. She screamed aloud, and then, overcome by pain and terror, fainted. When she came to herself, the phantom, which was still leaning over her, placed its cold, stiff lips to her ear, and sibilated :

“While you live let no mortal eye behold that wrist—to see it is sacrilege. And beware that you do not attempt to communicate to any of your friends that which I have told you. Your tongue would instantly cleave to the roof of your mouth were you to attempt to speak it, and your hand become paralysed were you to attempt to write it; for the secrets of futurity may only be divulged to those who are ordained to receive them.

“And now farewell, but first mark well my parting words; when your face becomes luminous, and a pale blue fire issues from your mouth, remember my warning,

for the trance will then be at hand, and no earthly precaution can avert or postpone the fulfilment of the prediction."

Bianca again became insensible, and although when consciousness returned the form of her friend no longer met her eyes, she was afraid to move over to the bell to ring for assistance, feeling much more terrified now than when face to face with the apparition: her blood ran cold, her flesh crept, the bed seemed to be stirring under her.

In this state of agitation and terror she remained until a flood of tears came to her relief, shortly after which she fell asleep, and did not awake until the sun was flooding the apartment with its cheerful and fear-dispelling light.

With consciousness, came back the remembrance of the events of the preceding night; but not until the painful evidences of the ghostly visitation had been inspected again and again, would she admit that those awful midnight experiences could be more than a dream. At last the conviction forced

itself that it was really the spirit of Laura Peyton which had been in the room, and again relief was sought in weeping. .

The thought now suggested itself that if the secret were to be preserved, the evidences of the spectre's visit must be concealed ; and she arose, put on a dressing gown, and went to an adjoining gallery where a long broom, used for sweeping the cornices, was kept, and with the aid of this implement withdrew the curtains from their extraordinary position. When this difficult task was accomplished, the wrist bearing the imprint of the spirit-hand was bound with black velvet.

When Bianca presented herself at breakfast, her brother Don Pedro, observing the bandage upon her wrist, inquired the reason, asking if her arm had been sprained or hurt. She was covered with confusion by the question, gave an evasive reply, and being closely cross-questioned became involved in a maze of contradiction, when bursting into tears, she declared that she neither would nor could

reveal the reason that the velvet was bound round the wrist.

"Let me adjure you," she continued solemnly, "never to allude to the subject again, so long as I live—which may not be long—you will never see me without that black ribbon. I have never in my life, my dear brother, refused to you a request before, and now I only do so because I have not the power to satisfy your curiosity."

"It is not curiosity, my dear sister, but I would be less than a brother did I not feel an interest in a matter which seems to move you so deeply. I see that you are involved in some danger; I think that I might be of service in aiding you to avert it, and therefore it is that I wish you to confide in me."

"I dare not! I cannot! urge me no further, I entreat you."

"Very well," said Don Pedro, seeming both surprised and hurt. "You were always wilful, and I know that in your present humour it is useless to press you further on the subject."

"Yet," he added more gently, "you said something about not living long. If, as I suspect, that which you wish to conceal is some mark which you fancy indicates the approach of a fatal disease, let me entreat of you to seek some able physician, for you may be mistaken in the symptoms, and so be torturing yourself with groundless fears."

"There is only one Physician who has power to help me, and him will I seek," replied Bianca solemnly.

The conversation ended here, Pedro apparently being satisfied with this assurance.

Breakfast was scarcely over, when a very beautiful girl, clad in a travelling dress, entered the room. Her pale face was working with some strong emotion, and for several seconds she struggled in vain to speak. At last, in a broken voice, she contrived to say—

"Another victim: death follows me wherever I go. Cousin Bianca, Laura Peyton is dead."

“On what day, and at what hour did she die?” asked Bianca, eagerly.

“Last Tuesday morning, at four o’clock,” was the response.

CHAPTER III.

THE PREDICTION FULFILLING.

Up to the moment when it was foretold to Bianca that she was fated to marry Frederick Harcourt, the girl had never thought of the youth as one whom it was possible to love. She liked him for his good nature and his innocence, but that was all. Had any mortal foretold that a time would come when, like Juliet, she would consent to "brave the horrors of the tomb" for his sake, the prediction would have seemed to her utterly absurd. The shy passion of the youth amused her, and out of a spirit of mischief, she had often affected to coquette with him for the purpose of witnessing his embarrassment and *mauvaise honte*. Now, however, all was changed, she saw in him her fate, and this belief elevated him to a position of

importance in her mind. He became at once an object of curiosity, interest and awe. Soon, to her intense dismay, she found a feeling of tenderness springing up in her heart, and her efforts to stifle this feeling seemed only to favour its growth. The more she struggled, the more she loved. In vain she painted to herself the horrors which must spring from any yielding to this emotion; these reflections added fresh fuel to the flame. The mushroom growth of this passion seemed to prove the infallibility of the spirit, and she found herself saying: "Why struggle against that which is inevitable; *che sara sara*, what will be will be." On one occasion, she resolved to secure herself against the fulfilment of the prediction by telling all to her friends, and pledging them to take such precautions as would ensure her against being consigned living to the tomb; but the moment that she attempted to betray the secret of the visit of the spirit, and its warning, a spasm seized her tongue, which became forcibly pressed against the

roof of her mouth, and, struck with terror, she gave up the idea; upon another, she essayed to commit the fatal secret to writing, but no sooner had the pen touched the paper, than her arm became stiff and powerless; and the doctor called in pronounced the case to be one of catalepsy. She then resolved, as the sole remaining means of escape from the predicted destiny, to withdraw herself from those scenes where her lover was to be met, and as the youth frequented all her favourite haunts, and every house and spot where it seemed to him likely that his mistress would come, this determination involved, not only a complete withdrawal from society, but a close confinement to the house. Bianca being of that gay nature which shines in society, and, therefore, loves it, soon found this state of perfect seclusion to be almost unbearable, and endeavoured to find reasons for putting an end to it.

Since the death-trance was only to seize her in the event of her wedding Harcourt, since her wedding with Harcourt could

only take place with her free will, and since she had made up her mind that with her own free will it never should take place, what danger could there be in going back to the joyous scenes of the Assembly Rooms?

To the joyous scenes she returned, and the evening of one fatal day terminated her fortitude, plunging her in a moment down that fatal abyss, which she had been so long meditating how to shun. Harcourt had often solicited his sole surviving parent for leave to enter the army, and at last obtained permission, and came to bid Bianca adieu before departure. In the bitterness of parting he forgot his shyness, and, falling at her feet, eloquently urged his suit. The lad's passion carried all obstacles before it. Bianca listened, trembled, her fortitude forsook her, she gave herself up for lost, and, regarding her fate as inevitable, consented to a union. "What will be will be," she said to herself, "and realisation has no terrors so great as those of anticipation." Now, although firmly

believing that the prediction would be fulfilled to the letter, she had lately been nourishing hopes of an ultimate escape with life, a certain extraordinary and ingenious scheme having suggested itself, which seemed to promise a safe passage through the ordeal of the tomb.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MIRACLES OF MODERN SCIENCE.

“ Good news for the ladies,” said Master Henry Hautville, a stout boy, with twinkling merry eyes, and a florid face : “ from the influence of Hemp and Arsenic no heart is secure, by their assistance no affection unattainable. Hail, mighty HEMP, deluder of bachelors and sure anchor of fading spinsters, beneath whose touch all those fond sensations and enchanting dreams which form the life of LOVE, shoot, in a moment, from the seed into a goodly fruit-bearing tree—like the Indian conjuror’s magic banyan—potent magician, whose spell hath power to transform misogynysts to ardent worshippers of the sex ! in the name of the ladies, all hail ! all hail !

“ Doubtless, ladies, you would like to

learn how Hemp acts as a provocative to the Proposal. Its effects are threefold : in the first place it predisposes to love : in the second, it forces the patient, *nolens volens*, to follow every train of ideas which may be suggested from without ; in the third, it magnifies, or exaggerates every feeling and every thought. If there be any little admiration in the mind of the patient for his would-be mistress, it is magnified one hundred-fold ; if he thought her good-looking before, he now sees in her a paragon of beauty ; and if there have existed some little *tendresse*, the feeling expands to a mighty and irresistible passion. The patient being completely under the control of external impressions, should be surrounded by images suggestive of the thoughts which it is desired to inspire : marble Cupids and Hymens should form part of the furniture of the apartment, and the walls should be hung with pictures representing the beatitudes of the state of engagement—pictures of *fiancés* enjoying their enviable privileges and perquisites ;

wandering unwatched by mamma, with the beatific object, hand in hand, and lip to lip, amid umbrageous shades, or on some terrace overhanging a moon-lit lake. On the other hand, every thing which can tend to bring to his mind the *désagréments* of matrimony must be rigidly excluded : for instance, the inopportune appearance of a squalling child, or a milliner's bill, would spoil all: the vagrant Imagination, starting off on the new train of ideas, would conjure up frightful pictures of a progeny as innumerable as the sands of the sea, and as noisy as the artificers of Babel: and of insolvency, bankruptcy without protection, the marshalsea, and so forth ; the proposal would die upon the parting lips, the uxorious thoughts fade from the softened heart. Another caution *nota bene* : care must be taken to exclude from the scene of action every other spinster, no matter how plain, frumpy, disagreeable, or old ; otherwise—such is the power of the drug—the vagrant fancy may invest her with omnipotent charms, and—disastrous result !—the proposal be made

to the wrong person. With regard to the quantity adapted to draw forth a proposal, half a grain to three grains is the usual dose. A person of vivid imagination is more easily affected than one of phlegmatic temperament; a bachelor of dreamy and romantic habits, than one given to fox-hunting, shooting, and athletic sports. Great care must be taken that the philter be only sufficient to exaggerate the feelings without producing intoxication—to make the bachelor “happy,” but not drunk. For the strange delusions, the visits of phantasmata, the reeling gait and convulsive laughter, which characterize the higher state of cannabinic fantasia, are so remarkable, and so easily recognized, that the patient could not fail to suspect that he had been drugged with hemp, and the reason, and perhaps the hand that had done the deed. Of course such exposure would be very unpleasant, and to prevent the possibility of it occurring, the victims of unrequited affection had better begin with small doses, increasing gradually until the “happy” point is reached. If the affair

be properly managed, detection is impossible; if the dose be properly proportioned to the constitution, habits, and idiosyncrasy of the bachelor, success is certain: the 'hempen potion' will as surely stimulate the bulbs of his affection into a luxuriant growth, as a certain well known preparation will cause hair to grow on the baldest head—like the celebrated Spanish onion pomade, 'IT NEVER FAILS.' ”

“But, Cousin Henry,” exclaimed Miss Diana Beauclerk (a pretty, plump blond, just entering her teens), “is this good news true? Does there *really* exist a drug with which the victim of unrequited affection may produce in the unkind one a reciprocal passion?”

“If you will not believe me, send to your bookseller for the *Chemistry of Common Life*. The talented writer says, ‘From the influence of hemp no heart is secure, by its assistance no affection is unattainable.’ The potent potion spontaneously produces the lively flame of the master passion, in a moment changing the misogo-

nyst to an ardent worshipper of the sex."

"Like the little Western Flower, which we read of in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*," observed Miss Beatrix Howard, a tall, slim, dark-haired beauty, just entering her ninth year, "the juice of which had the power to make man or woman madly dote upon the next live creature that appeared, even were it a lion, bear, wolf, bull, meddling monkey, or busy ape."

"I have no doubt that by means of this potent plant a woman might be made to love a meddling monkey or a busy ape."

"What fun it would be to try it on somebody," said Diana, clapping her hands.

"Pray do not try it on me," exclaimed Lord Plantagenet, a white-haired old beau, with a look of alarm. "I assure you, Miss Diana, your lovely face is a more potent love-philter than the choicest hemp in the Calcutta bazaar."

"Do not be spoiling my niece by flattery, my Lord," entreated Miss Ethel Beauclerc, a tall spinster of fifty. "She

is eaten up with vanity already, God knows; and I fear her head will be quite turned with conceit before she grows up. She spends nearly all her time before the glass."

Although the old lady spoke thus, her countenance betrayed that she was much pleased by his lordship's eulogiums; it said, as plain as countenance could say, "If she is vain, she has something to be vain of."

"This is a digression," broke in Master Henry, "let us return to the subject we were discussing: the miracles of modern science. I was about to observe, that scientific men are making such progress in the domains of physiology and chemistry, that the time seems coming when the element of decay will be eradicated from nature, and the human form etherialized, immortal, beautiful for ever, will rove through gardens blooming with an eternal spring. To detail to you the various discoveries which have recently been made, tending to the development of never-

fading youth and loveliness, would take up more time than is at present at my disposal, suffice it to say it has been found the most surprising complexions may be produced by ozone, that the aged may be restored to youth by the injection into their veins of blood taken from the young, and that Doctor Von Tschudi has recently brought to light the fact, that a mineral exists which taken internally will give to the figure the graceful curves of *embonpoint*, to the skin an exquisite softness and diaphenity, to the complexion a dazzling fairness, to the cheeks a charming blush, to the eyes a bewitching lustre, in a word so enhance the charms that even the most confirmed bachelor will forsake his celibate faith, and throw himself grovelling at the possessor's feet to worship and adore. Hence it has been styled by the eloquent author of the *Chemistry of Common Life*, the 'Harbinger of Happiness,' the 'Awakener of Love,' the 'Soother of Ardent Longings,' and the 'Bestower of Contentment and Peace.' He says:

‘The wise woman whom the charmless female of the East consults administers to the desired one a philtre of hachish which deceives his imagination, cheats him into the belief that charms exist and attractive beauty where there are none, and defrauds him as it were of a love which with the truth before him he would never have yielded. She acts directly on his brain with her Hempen Potion, leaving the unlovely object he is to admire as unlovely as before; but the *Arsenic eater really* adds to the natural graces of her filling and rounded form, paints with brighter hues her blushing cheeks and tempting lips, and imparts a new and winning lustre to her sparkling eye. Every one sees and admires the reality of her glowing beauty, the young men sound her praises and become suplicants for her favors. She triumphs over the affections of all, and compels the chosen one to her feet. Thus even cruel arsenic, so often the minister of crime and the parent of sorrow, bears a blessed jewel in its forehead, and as a

love awakener, becomes at times the *harbinger of happiness*, the *soother of ardent longings*, and the *bestower of contentment and peace*."

"For God's sake," whispered Lord Plantagenet in the ear of the speaker, "tell the ladies nothing more about these treacherous drugs. You will have them poisoning themselves with arsenic, in hopes of improving their complexion and figure; or worse still, poisoning us with hemp, with a view to make us in love with them. Mrs. Beauclerc is certain to try if Hidiri will revive her faded charms, and will probably fall a victim to her vanity; and some of those mad-cap girls will be experimenting upon me with their love-philters, and I shall be led into making a fool of myself, if I escape with life."

The reply to this remonstrance was interrupted by the entrance of a tall fair lad with a handsome Saxon face and a military air, who was greeted as Edward Norton.

"Bad news, ladies," he cried; "two of your lovers are forsaking you; Fred Harcourt and Bill Annesley are going to

be married. I have it on the very best authority. The ladies to whom they are engaged are the Donnas Mendoza, natives of Spain, both very young and very pretty. Their brother, Don Pedro, is an hidalgo—whatever that may be—of the highest rank. The Harcourts picked them up at one of the German watering places, Homburg, I believe. The girl to whom Fred is engaged—her Christian name is Bianca—is in the same style of beauty as our promising young belle, Miss Beatrice here. Dear me, how lovely the child looks this morning; as usual, twisting that exquisite little mouth of hers into grotesquely-bewitching forms,” [the girl was making faces to intimate her utter contempt for her eulogist] “expressing with a single turn of her mobile lip, that which it would take a less gifted person several sentences to describe. No wonder Mr. Raphael asks such an immense price for his Helen—no sum would be too great for a spirited likeness of those budding charms.”

Mr. Raphael had obtained permission to

have Beatrice to sit to him as a study for Helen in his famous historical picture.

"I feel no doubt that when Miss Beatrice comes out, her admirers will be as numerous as those of the celebrated daughter of King Tyndarus," said Lord Pantagenet, with a courtly bow to the little lady.

"Not yet out of the nursery, and yet has more lovers than she has fingers on her hands, and toes on her feet," chimed in Cousin Henry. "What will be the number of her conquests when she comes out?—Cocker himself will not be able to calculate them!"

"Only a bread-and-butter Miss, and yet how varied her accomplishments," continued Norton, raising his eyes in affected astonishment. "Let me enumerate them: Can ride like an Amazon, fish like an Isaac Walton, shoot like a Gordon Cumming, and talk turf like the Editor of *Bell's Life*—only nine, and has already acquired the honourable reputation of being the fastest child in the county!"

"Oh you have not mentioned half my

accomplishments yet," rejoined Miss Beatrice, laughing, "I have been complimented on my singing, and complimented on my playing, and complimented on my dancing, and complimented on my deportment, and complimented on my tact and wit, and complimented on my manners generally, and complimented on my French, and complimented on my——"

"Silence, child," cried Aunt Ethel. "Gracious heaven, can you talk of nothing but yourself? I will tell you what you have *not* been complimented on, you have *not* been complimented on the graceful shyness and reticence so becoming in the young of both sexes, but especially in the female, and you have *not* been complimented on"—here the censor's lips were stopped by kiss.

Norton now led the conversation back to the subject from which the youthful charms of Miss Beatrice had caused him to wander, and, starting from the point at which he had diverged, continued:—"After the Harcourts had brought the Mendozas

back to Scotland with them, it occurred to Fred, who had grown very spooney about the younger of the two girls, that it would be a good plan to get some *cicisbeo* to take care of and amuse Inez during the walking and boating expeditions, so that he, Harcourt, might be able to devote himself exclusively to Bianca. A duly qualified person, however, was hard to find, for it was necessary that he should be more ugly and less agreeable than the *co-cicisbeo*, lest instead of contenting himself with 'doing gooseberry' with Inez, he might 'take it into his head' to cut out the *co.* with Bianca, an awful contingency, the contemplation of which ever unsettled the nerves and mind of the timid and fearful lover, producing dark fits of despondency during the hours of waking, and terrible nightmares in which the 'cutting out' actually took place with exaggerated horrors. At last an ugly and seemingly safe man was found, a man whom Bianca protested to be so 'odious,' that she 'hated him at first sight,' and who, on being told of this

unfavourable impression, declared the dislike to be 'mutual,' and Inez to be far more beautiful than her friend.' This person was your cousin, Bill Annesley, barrister-at-law, who was spending the long vacation with his mamma, brothers and sisters. Still Fred hesitated to effect the introduction, fearing his friend might prove false to him and steal into the heart of his mistress. In vain Bianca hinted that one beau, however active, cannot take that care of two young ladies in mountain rambles, or rather scrambles, which their safety imperatively demands; and, that if a second were not forthcoming, these delightful scrambling rambling 'parties must be given up. Finding these hints disregarded, she openly taxed her lover with being afraid to invite a second *cicisbeo* lest the invited might prove a rival, and quizzed him unmercifully; upon which he, being struck with shame, and anxious to prove that the unlucky guess—surely it could be but a guess? how could she penetrate to the inmost recess in his heart? how could she

discover his most secret thoughts?—was altogether wrong, invited Annesley to tea that very night, and that very night introduced him with many flourishes. Bianca gave the young barrister such a flattering reception, that the Demon of Jealousy entered into the heart of Harcourt and rent it, causing him to exclaim, with bitter self-reproach, ‘I know he’ll cut me out—I always had a foreboding that it would be my luck to introduce to the girl I love, a fellow who will cut me out! But I’ll nip the dangerous acquaintance in the bud by treating him with coldness, and not asking him any more.’ Vain hope! The barrister did not seem to feel the coldness, being a particularly cool person himself; and as for ‘asking,’ he did not want asking, he asked himself; asked himself to all Fred’s boating parties; asked himself to all Fred’s pic-nics; joined the girls in their walks, and invited himself to accompany them home to tea—Fred’s tea; in fact, used all Fred’s property, as if the owner were a nonentity. In return, he

invited the Harcourts party to splendid banquets (to which Bianca dragged her unwilling lover), and never failed to send to the pic-nics and boating parties hampers of choice and rare wines.

“The locks of jet, the rich brown skin, and the full and magnificent figure of the lovely Inez, soon made a profound impression on the susceptible Annesley. He thought he saw that she reciprocated the passion, thought he read love in every glance of her dark flashing eyes; and yet there seemed to mingle with the emotion an agony and despair inexplicable. She avoided being alone with him, and at times shrank from his touch with a face of terror. He was much puzzled by this strange conduct, and for a long time vainly endeavoured to find a clue to the mystery. At last Sabra Harcourt confided to him the reason:—It seems that a singular fatality attaches to the poor girl. Some mysterious influence dogs her steps, so that her friends sicken and die without any apparent cause, in some cases dropping suddenly

dead, although having been in perfect health a moment before; in others dissolution being preceded by the appearance to them of horrible apparitions. When the Harcourts invited her to come to them on a visit, she at first refused, to all their entreaties tearfully repeating, 'death follows me wherever I go, I will not be so selfish as to bring mourning into ~~your~~ family.' But eventually her scruples ~~were~~ overcome, and now there she is, and I confess I have enough superstition in my nature to be interested in the result, to wonder what will follow: will the family die off under the shadow of this human Upas? And who will be the first victim?"

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

The Advent of Inez at Garelohead was immediately followed by the singular death of the butler, who expired without there being any disease to account for the event; and by the appearance of cholera, of a most malignant type, in the village, under the strokes of which terrible malady the neighbours commenced to die rapidly.

When the day appointed for her marriage with Harcourt had been fixed, Bianca was observed to fall into a state of profound melancholy. Under the influence of this depressing emotion, her health gave way, and her *fiancé* becoming alarmed, induced his mother to ask on a visit Abraham Abernethy, an old friend of

the family. He was a man profoundly versed not only in the ordinary branches of medical knowledge, but also in the deeper mysteries of science, having wandered far along those occult paths which few physicians dare to travel lest they should be looked upon with suspicion by their medical brethren. He was familiar with the magic of imagination, had made singular discoveries in ozone and electricity, and was said to be secretly carrying on a series of experiments with a view to ascertain if the aged could be restored to youth by the system of transfusion suggested by the celebrated Libavius. Many wild stories were current about him, some of a nature almost incredible. For instance, a medical student asserted, that upon one occasion having hid himself in the doctor's sanctum, he saw him re-call to life a dead body which had been sent from one of the hospitals as a subject for anatomy.

Lately Abernethy had given up practice that he might devote himself exclusively to the unveiling of the mysteries of

nature; but he still, however, responded to the call of his friends and the poor, whenever his mistress, Natural Philosophy, could dispense with his services.

It was in the character of a friend—for Bianca had stedfastly refused to allow a physician to be called in—that Abernethy was introduced to the patient; yet he found that although she was naturally of a frank and communicative disposition, the moment the conversation was turned to the failure of her health, or the black band on the wrist, she indicated an inflexible resolution to afford no information on these matters. The doctor therefore resorted to artifice. One night, when the patient was retiring to rest, he administered a powerful narcotic, and while she was under its influence, removed the velvet from the wrist. His surprise was great upon discovering scars bearing a strong resemblance to the fingers of a hand, marking the ivory skin. His interest was now powerfully excited, and he examined the whole body carefully, but failed to find any other marks which

might guide him in forming a diagnosis of the case. The body was well nourished, the organs all healthy, not a trace of physical disease was any where apparent; it was therefore evident that the disorder sapping the springs of life must be a moral one. The mysterious marks upon the wrist were doubtless in some way connected with it; but how?

Upon the following night, about an hour before the usual bed time, the doctor administered to the patient a strong dose of the *Amanita Muscoria*, or Siberian Fungus, a drug which has the singular property of compelling people to talk of whatever may be uppermost in their minds, thus affording a means of causing them to divulge their most cherished secrets.

The effect of this potent potion was soon apparent; Bianca threw off her melancholy, and seating herself at the piano, which she had not touched for some time, commenced to play piece after piece, and sing song after song, in a manner which surprised and charmed her auditors.

Never before had she exhibited such musical talent—the performance seemed something more than human. After a time the strains became wild and disconnected, and the operator loquacious and boisterous, breaking off every now and then to pour forth a torrent of words on some subject suggested by the measure or the harmony, or to give vent to a burst of laughter, or to dance some grotesque figure on the carpet. Abernethy cautiously watched the Amitanian intoxication proceed stage by stage, until volition was completely suspended, and like a musical box which continues playing the tune it is set to perform until moved on to another, so Bianca continued to talk upon any subject which was started until her attention was directed elsewhere. This was the state of mind which the doctor sought to produce; taking the patient by the injured hand, with a dexterous turn he withdrew the velvet, and pointing to the scars, asked how they came there. The girl was instantly seized with strong convulsions, and when these subsided, her

ravings were so incoherent that the doctor found it difficult to shape out of them a connected tale. He gathered that she imagined herself to have been visited by the spirit of Laura Peyton, and that the apparition by grasping her wrist had produced the mark of the hand which the black band was worn to conceal. So far his inferences were correct, but he fell into a fatal mistake upon coming to the conclusion that the prediction of the apparition was to the effect that the patient would *die* at mid-night upon the twelfth of August, the day fixed for the wedding. Had he known that the vaticination was that she would fall into a *trance* at that time, the subsequent steps taken by him would have been of a different nature, and must have saved her.

That Bianca would die at the hour predicted by the phantom, unless by some artifice, physical or moral, her attention could be drawn from the spectral vaticination he did not doubt: the melancholy ends of Lady Beresford, Lord Lyttleton,

Miss Lee, Sir John Ware's chaplain, and Mr. Towes showed how potent was the witchcraft of such a prophecy upon an impressionable mind. He resolved not to attempt to argue her out of the fatal belief, knowing well she could not be brought to believe that powerful emotion such as that which would spring from her singular hallucination was capable of producing instantaneously such physical appearances as those upon her wrist. Besides, were the fact of her secret having been mastered known, she might guess the artifices by which it was proposed to avert the impending catastrophe, and absolute ignorance of these was a circumstance necessary to insure success.

A few days before that appointed for the wedding, the following strange circumstance occurred. Bianca retired to bed at the usual hour, and feeling nervous, took Harcourt's little sister Sabra to sleep with her. Her companion was so drowsy as to be unable to converse, and in a little time the silence of the room was unbroken,

save by the deep and regular breathing of a sleeper, the beating of a frightened heart, and the ticking of the clock on the mantel-shelf. When the midnight hour had passed uneventfully the watcher, relieved from her apprehensions, fell into a troubled sleep, in which she had this dream: She was seized by death-trance. Her friends, believing life to be departed, laid her out as one dead. At the expiration of the usual time she was shrouded and coffined. While one by one the members of the family were taking leave, and bedewing her face with tears, she struggled to make some little motion with her hand whereby they might know she was still alive, but was unable to do so. The undertaker placed her in the coffin and screwed down the lid. A long horrid interval of silence ensued. It was broken at last by the tramp of many feet ascending the stairs. They entered the room. She felt the coffin lifted. She knew they were bearing it to the hearse. Again she struggled—again in vain. Her fancy painted the hearse with its nodding

plumes drawing up before the door; the coffin being carried out on men's shoulders, watched by a crowd of the curious. A severe jar, the sound of wood sliding over wood, and immediately afterwards the slamming of a door told her that the hearse had received its tenant. The rumbling of wheels, and the muffled sound of horses' feet followed. The last journey was commenced. The hearse stopped—doubtless at the gate of the cemetery. The coffin was lifted out. In fancy she saw the procession, the clergyman in advance of the coffin, the mourners in their long cloaks behind, moving up the main artery of the cemetery. The clergyman commenced the burial service: "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The sound of the footfalls growing soft, told her that the party must have left the path and be travelling over clay or grass, and that the grave must be at hand!—"O spare me a little that I may recover my strength

before I go hence and be no more seen." A little further on, the coffin was lowered to the ground, and sounds followed as of ropes being adjusted round it. "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery: He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death." The coffin was lowered into the grave. The horror of the situation, the intensity of her feelings, begin to break the spell that has so long bound her, she found that she could now whisper and feebly move her hand. "I am alive," she tried to scream; but the words came forth only in a soft hiss which was drowned by the hollow thud of stones and earth falling on the coffin. Faintly came the words, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of his great mercy, to take unto himself the soul of our dear sister here departed, we therefore commit her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Fainter, fainter, fainter

became the sounds as the earth was heaped in. The air was nearly exhausted, she could scarcely breathe. In her agony and despair she made one more mighty effort to shriek aloud— * * *

Struggling violently, Bianca woke to find herself enduring all the tortures of suffocation, her chest prest down, and her arms pinioned to her sides by some irresistible force. Something cold and wet like clay lay heavily upon her face, and for a moment the fearful thought possessed her mind that the scenes which she had seemed to pass through were real. She tried to call out, but could not. In a little time the weight was removed from her face, her chest relieved from the pressure, and her arms set free. She breathed and moved freely once more. Dark as the room was, she thought she perceived something white moving from the bed side; and immediately afterwards a slight jingling sound, and a current of air convinced her that the door had been opened. For some minutes she could not speak

above a whisper. When her voice returned she longed to scream, but dared not, fearing the sound might recal the white figure. She shook Sabra, but failed for some time to waken her. At last she succeeded, and then found courage to light the candle. Her face feeling very stiff and odd, she glanced at the mirror which was commanded by the bed, and discovered several white marks on her mouth, lips, and nose, and on rubbing them with her hand, particles of what seemed to be white clay became detached and fell upon the quilt. Abernethy pronounced the patient to have been suffering from the disorder called *Ephialtes*, or *night mare*. The white substance which still adhered to parts of her face, he examined with much curiosity, and preserved a portion for analysis.

The wedding took place, and when the time came for the bride to retire, Abernethy caused her to be presented with a cup of mulled wine containing a powerful narcotic. The preparation of this cup had been entrusted to Inez, and so well was

the bitter taste of the opium concealed by the spices, that the patient drank the whole contents without suspicion. Abernethy hoped by this artifice to cause the bride to sleep past the predicted hour.

Recalled from what seemed to have been but a mere doze by a light flashing across her eyes, Bianca found that during her state of unconsciousness, the room had been brilliantly lighted up with candles of a peculiar make, and a coffin upholstered in black cloth, placed on trestles, within a few feet of her. The cover of the mortuary shell was standing beside it in an upright position, and the name plate being turned towards the bed, she was able to read the inscription:

BIANCA MENDOZA HARCOURT,
DIED 12TH AUGUST, 1854,
AGED 15.

Her first feeling was one of extreme terror, her second one of relief. The trance had come, she was being waked: the prediction was fulfilled, and the danger past! It was true the spirit spoke of a carrying

to the tomb, but then there were many instances of ghostly prophecies being only fulfilled in part. While picturing Harcourt's rapture upon receiving again her from whom death seemed to have parted him, she discovered that within the shell the outlines of a shrouded human body were distinctly visible. Chilled by horror, yet urged by an irresistible curiosity to know whose the remains could be, she got up, and on withdrawing the winding sheet, recognised in the features of the corpse—oh God!—her own.

What happened immediately after this, she could not remember clearly, having fallen into a dreamy state, in which events seemed to occur without leaving any distinct impression. When the veil was lifted from her senses, the room was again dark, and the funeral paraphernalia gone. A measured tramping sound drew her to the window: by the light of the crescent moon, looking forth from a crow's nest, a funeral was winding slowly along the avenue towards the road. The dense ground mist gave the procession a shadowy appearance,

and soon hid it from sight altogether. While she was straining her eyes in the direction in which it had disappeared, Harcourt entered, and on learning what had occurred, sent for Doctor Abernethy.

The alarm of the worthy physician was very great upon finding that the opiate had failed to produce that deep and prolonged sleep which he had counted on; and that sensorial illusions of a dangerous character were developing themselves; and he almost gave up hope, upon finding the patient falling into a state resembling that peculiar intoxication produced by the plant *Cannabis Indica*, or Indian Hemp, in which the mind is completely under the control of external impressions, and all the sensations and conceptions exaggerated. Slight indications, too, appeared of an approaching attack of that singular condition of the muscular system which pathologists have named catalepsy.

When midnight drew near, the girl commenced to sink fast, the cheeks and lips grew white, the pulse feeble and in-

termittent; yet Abernethy thought she might still be saved, if by an artifice it were possible to persuade her that the predicted hour was passed. With this view he put forward the clocks and watches, and then called the attention of the patient to the time. She expressed surprise, compared watches, and then seemed satisfied. A marked improvement in the pulse became apparent.

Being seized with sudden and severe illness, Abernethy now retired, entrusting to Inez the task of removing the apparatus with which he had been endeavouring to revive the patient's fading vitality by transfusing to her veins some of her husband's vigorous blood.

"You hurt my arm," said Bianca to Inez, "do not meddle with the syringe."

At this moment her face commenced to shine with a pale light, and a luminous vapour was seen issuing from her mouth and nostrils.

"Alas," she said, "the appearance of this terrible phenomenon is to me indubi-

table proof that I have hitherto lain under a mistake with regard to the hour, and that midnight has not yet arrived. Should anything happen to me presently, do nothing with my body until you have read my will, which you will find on my person next my heart."

A voice on the water called out, "Fore-castle ahoy, ring eight bells forward."

"There," continued she, "I knew I was right about the time; some vessel outside—doubtless some iron steam-boat come up to have her compasses adjusted—is about to ring twelve o'clock."

Hardly had she finished speaking when a bell on the water commenced to toll, and simultaneously the door was thrown open, and a female figure, wrapped in a shroud, advanced a few steps into the room, and beckoned to Bianca, saying "the time is come." Upon receiving this summons, the unfortunate young woman seemed suddenly transmuted to stone; and like a marble statue overbalanced, rigid and white, fell forward upon the floor. When assist-

ance arrived, it was found that the heart had ceased to beat.

It was subsequently ascertained that no vessel of any kind was in the Garloch that night; yet many of the fishermen heard the order to ring eight bells, succeeded by what they conceived to be the sound of a ship's bell ringing the hour coming out of the darkness which shrouded the lake near Kelpy Villa.

CHAPTER VI.

EARTH TO EARTH, ASHES TO ASHES,

DUST TO DUST.

As a rule, when we lose one dear to us, it is only gradually that the truth comes home, we cannot realise that they are lost to us for ever. Even when we view the body, we still do not feel the change which has taken place; the form is there, looking very much as we knew it in life, a little paler, a little more still, that is all. But if the lost one have been remarkable for vivacity and animation of countenance, then when we view the dead face, we realise at a glance our loss.

Thus it was with Harcourt; and the shock was great in proportion to its

suddenness and completeness ; to him the well known changes of expression had been Bianca ; repose was Death.

While he looked at the still face, in life so restless, he recalled the time when he had entreated Bianca to keep the features in repose were it but for a moment, so that he might have an opportunity for impressing them upon his memory, and her reply : "A time is coming, is not far off, when you will see that which you plead for now, and wish that it had never been." How true were the words ! What would he not now give to restore mobility to those beautiful features ? Was he never again to see those changes of expression with which he was so familiar ? A mad longing to see the lip, curved like a Cupid's bow, twist itself once more into one of its grotesque smiles, seized him ; he bent down, and placing his hands upon the mouth caused it to assume various odd shapes. Still, the forms assumed by the lips were not those which they wore in life ; there was a fascination in them, but it was

a horrible fascination, death seemed to him to proclaim its empire in every motion he produced. And indeed the contortions of the mouth contrasted strangely and unpleasantly with the stillness of the rest of the features. Perhaps it was this want of sympathy which made his efforts so complete a failure.

While engaged in endeavouring to reproduce in the dead some of those smiles which in life had bewitched him, he observed what he at first thought to be a spontaneous movement, or twitching in the right arm, and for a moment believed that animation was returning, but too soon became convinced that the seeming motion had been nothing more than an illusion of his excited imagination. The reaction caused a fresh burst of sorrow, he threw himself upon the corpse and pressed his lips passionately against those which never more could respond to his kiss. They did not seem cold. He started up in a transport of joy, all his hopes resuscitated. Soon he sank down again in

despair, attributing the phenomenon to his own lips being cold as those he pressed. He could not bear the idea of parting from the body.

While he was in this mood, a person called, representing himself to be an official in the employment of the newly-appointed Officer of Health for Dumbartonshire. It was stated by this man, that information had been received by the public functionary whom he represented, that the death was one of cholera, and the friends of the deceased were endeavouring to conceal the fact by means of an idle and improbable ghost story. The body had already been kept above ground beyond the time deemed safe during the epidemic, and great indignation was manifested by the residents at this disregard of public safety—the neighbourhood was in a state of panic, and the most lamentable consequences must ensue, if Mr. Harcourt persisted in his refusal to bury his dead. He then proceeded to threats; these being met by counter

threats, he sought Mrs. Harcourt, and told her that her son ought to be put under restraint, for that his recent loss had deprived him of reason.

Mrs. Harcourt having apologised for the conduct of her son, who was of a very hasty temper, went on to entreat the officer to allow the body to remain above ground, until decomposition unequivocally manifested itself; for the worthy and learned Doctor Abernethy had often assured her, that this condition was the only positive evidence of death admitted by physiologists, and warned her never to permit any one she loved to be interred until it appeared.

"I have not the honour of knowing personally the worthy individual you have named," replied the other with a sneer, "but I am familiar with his reputation. His medical brethren have long since refused to meet him in consultation, his name has been struck off the lists of the College of Surgeons and Physicians, and he is regarded by all as a rank charlatan."

The history and statistics of death-trance warranted Doctor Abernethy in giving to Mrs. Harcourt the caution to which she had alluded.

In New York, the risk of being buried alive, which the townspeople ran under regulations similar to those now existing in England, was recognised many years ago, and in the year 1829 it was ordered that coffins presented for burial be kept above ground eight days, open at the head, and that strings be attached to the hands and feet of the body in such a manner that the least movement will cause a bell to ring. Under this arrangement one person out of every two hundred presented for burial returned to life. How many more lives would have been saved had the term been prolonged, and systematic *uninterrupting* efforts made to restore animation so long as decomposition was absent, we can only guess. A paragraph lately appeared in Galignani, containing a report of a debate in the French Senate on the risk attached to the existing system of inter-

ment. From it we learn that Vicomte de Guéronnière, when presenting a petition upon the subject, stated that in consequence of some late excavations in an ancient cemetery several coffins had been dug up in which the skeletons they contained were found in horrible contortions, attesting a death-struggle after interment of the most frightful suffering. His Eminence Cardinal Donnet rose to express his hope that M. de Coursol's petition would be referred to the Minister of the Interior, inasmuch as his pastoral experience had convinced him that many were buried alive, especially in remote country districts. The Cardinal cited two instances in which he himself had rescued victims from this horrible mode of death, and related the following incident:—"In the year 1826, at the close of a sultry summer afternoon, a young priest fainted while in the act of preaching. Hours elapsed—he gave no sign of life. *The village Doctor pronounced him dead*, inquired his age, place of birth, and signed the burial licence. The

bishop in whose cathedral the young cure had been performing the service arrived and recited the *De Profundis*. The coffin-maker measured the body. In the dead of night, a young friend, hearing of the event, arrived to take a last farewell; the sound of the familiar voice acted as an electric shock on the supposed corpse, and a superhuman effort of nature was the result. The following day the young priest was again in his pulpit, and, gentlemen, he is now in the midst of you, and forty years subsequent to this experience implores of you not only to recommend that increased precautions be taken to see that the law as it stands be carried out, but that new preventive measures be decreed to prevent irreparable misfortunes."

It has been demonstrated again and again that the entire absence of the ordinary signs of life does not prove life to be irrevocably gone. The body may be cold and stiff, the pulse imperceptible, no respiratory action visible, the eyes may have become glassy, the blood may refuse

to flow from an open vein, and there may be an odour of decomposition present, and even blue marks, the result of partial mortification, and yet the body may be alive.

It is a lamentable thing that we are so barbarous in the nineteenth century as to bury the victims of cholera within twenty-four hours after the pulse has ceased to be audible. We dare not speculate upon how many recover in the grave, and shudderingly endeavour to turn from the picture which our imagination will draw of the agony and despair of that terrible waking.

Mrs. Harcourt, having briefly alluded to the painful evidence of the difficulty of discriminating the living from the dead, said: "A French author, Bruhier, has collected fifty-two cases of persons buried alive, and four cases of premature dissection. The awful end of the Cardinal Sommaglia, the Abbé Prevost, the patient of Vesalius, and the remarkable Warwickshire case, are known to every physician."

“With these facts before your eyes, I ask if you still insist upon the body being buried before the only indubitable sign of death at present known, decomposition, shows itself?”

“I do. The poor are forced to bury their dead within a certain specified time, and we must not appear to have one law for the rich and another law for the poor. Were we in every case to wait until decomposition set in, we would lose one hundred lives by panic and contagion for every one we saved by the new practice from being buried alive. The Public Health demands that interment shall follow quickly upon death during cholera. By our laws directed against crime, innocent people are sometimes hanged in mistake for the guilty, but society cannot afford to prevent the recurrence of such mistakes by abolishing hanging; in a similar manner, by our regulations designed to preserve the Public Health, the living, I admit, are sometimes during cholera buried in mistake for the dead, but the Public Health cannot afford to prevent the recurrence of such mistakes by giving up early interments.

I am now going to the nearest Magistrate for a warrant for the apprehension of your son for obstructing me in the discharge of my duty, and will shortly return with such assistance as will render all resistance to my authority unavailing."

Mrs. Harcourt sought an interview with her son for the purpose of urging him to submit to that which seemed inevitable, and allow the body to be buried. He refused peremptorily to admit her to the chamber of the dead, and told her to warn the Officer of Health, and the police, that he would shoot the first man who attempted to force an entrance into the room in which his wife was lying. The poor mother, believing that her son, in his present state of excitement, would not hesitate to execute that which he threatened, was much terrified, and bade Sabra go to him, endeavour to calm him, and persuade him to offer no further resistance to the lawful authority of the Officer of Health.

Sabra found her brother loading a seven-chamber revolver, inflexibly resolved to execute his threat.

On the body, next the heart, sustained there by a string placed round the neck, had been found a packet purporting to be the last will and testament of Bianca Harcourt. Poor Fred now tendered this parcel, still tied and sealed, to his sister, requesting her to examine its contents.

Thus ran the singular document: "In the name of God, Amen. I, Bianca Harcourt—being sound in body and mind, but apprehensive of the near approach of death, real or apparent, and having a great dread of being supposed dead while yet alive, and in that state dissected by the surgeons for the purpose of discovering the cause of my supposed death, like the unfortunate Abbe Prevost; or of being buried alive, a fate which it has been proved thousands meet with annually—do desire that the physicians in attendance be not allowed to open my body under any pretence whatever. And I do desire that I be not confined for one month after the doctors pronounce me to be dead, and not then unless decomposition has set in. And I further desire that

the body when placed in the coffin be warmly clothed, that the head be covered with a thick gauze veil which will not hinder respiration, but will prevent my friends from seeing the changes which death may make in my face; and that the lid of the coffin be not fastened. And I desire that the coffin be made of glass, and filled with perforations for admitting air, and be kept above ground for thirty years, in such a situation that the sun may daily shine upon it. And I do desire that it may not be laid in a churchyard, or near other dead bodies, but in a garden filled with sweet scented flowers; especially migionette, wall-flower, sweet-scented verbenas, stocks, and such like. And I wish that all my pets: my dog, my lamb, my goat, my fawn, and my birds, be kept in this garden, within view of the coffin; and that those who love me occasionally visit and feed my pets, and place fresh flowers upon my coffin, but do not endeavour to look beneath the veil. And I further desire the coffin may not be shaped like a coffin, and that nothing which could remind

me of death if I should chance to return to life be left near me: no winding sheet, no brass name-plate, plumes, sepulchral ornaments, or any of the other awful insignia of the king of horrors.

“I tremble as I write. Daily the foreboding has been growing stronger that I will be buried alive. Death-trance, Doctor Abernethy says, often fastens upon cholera. If I am seized with the prevailing epidemic and succumb to death-trance, then the Medical Officer of Health may insist upon my early interment. If this should take place, I call upon you my friends to protect me, if necessary by force, from judicial murder. I will relate a case in point taken from Doctor Mayo’s work. . There was a Colonel Russel, whose wife, to whom he was affectionately attached, died or appeared to do so. But he would not allow the body to be buried; and threatened to shoot any one who should interfere to remove it for that purpose. His conduct was guided by reason as well as by affection and instinct. He said he would not part from the body till its

decomposition had begun. Eight days had passed, during which the body of his wife gave no sign of life; when as he sat bedewing her hand with his tears, the church bell tolled, and, to his unspeakable amazement his wife sat up and said,—‘That is the last bell; we shall be too late,’—she recovered.

“As an instance of the closeness with which death-trance may simulate true death, I will quote the case of the Rev. William Tenant, recorded in the ‘Philadelphia Evangelical Intelligencer’ :—While conversing in Latin one morning with his brothers, the Rev. William Tenant fainted and died away. At the usual time he was laid-out upon a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighborhood were invited to attend his funeral the next day. In the evening his physician and friend returned from a ride in the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain; and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying-out the body thought he had observed a little tremor

of the flesh under the arm, although the *body* was *cold* and *stiff*, he endeavoured to ascertain the fact. He first put his own hand in warm water, to make it as sensitive as possible, and then felt under the arm and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people who had been invited to the funeral should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discoloured, and the whole body stiff and cold. However, the doctor finally prevailed, and all probable means were used to discover symptoms of returning life. But the third day arrived and no hopes were entertained of success but by the doctor who never left him, night nor day. The people were again invited, and assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still objected; and at last confined his request for delay to one hour, then to half an hour, and finally to a quarter of an hour. He had discovered that the tongue was much swollen, and threatened to crack. He was endeavour-

ing to soften it by some emollient ointment put upon a feather, when the brother came in about the expiration of the last period, and mistaking what the doctor was doing for an attempt to feed him, manifested some impatience, thinking it foolish to feed a lifeless corpse, and insisted that the funeral should proceed. At this critical and important moment, the body, to the great alarm and astonishment of all present, opened its eyes, gave a deep groan, and sunk again into apparent death.' ”

Sabra, in her mind, had so identified the body of Bianca with that of the Rev. William Tenant that she laid the will down almost expecting to hear a deep groan. None came.

She resumed the reading :—“ ‘ This put an end to all thoughts of burying him ; and every effort was again employed in hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In an hour the eyes again opened, a heavy groan proceeded from the body and—’ ”

At this instant Harcourt uttered a loud exclamation of joy and satisfaction. He had

dipped his hand in hot water, in the manner followed by the doctor in the Rev. William Tenant's case, and then applied it to the axilla, or arm-pit, thereby discovering a remarkable warmth to exist in that locality. Sabra, on placing her hand in the hollow, thought she felt it too. To place the matter beyond all doubt, a thermometer was procured. When placed in the axilla it registered 104° , nearly six degrees above the average, or standard of human life. There is a story on record of a woman who recovered from apparent death while being carried to the cemetery, in consequence of the hearse being accidentally upset upon the way, whereby a nail, protruding in the interior of the coffin, was driven into a vein in her temple. The lady in question, who lived in the thriving seaport-town of D——a, about an hour's rail from Dublin, had died (at least was buried) a short time before the occurrence of the events we are narrating, and most of the papers, in an obituary, gave a short account of the curious event in her early career, whereby her life had been prolonged

to the dust from which it was made. Do not deceive yourself—she is quite dead.”

Harcourt told him of the movements which he had first witnessed ; of the heat under the arm-pit ; of the blood not being coagulated.”

“Non-coagulation of the blood is no proof that life exists,” replied the officer. “It may occur in the dead, when the blood has been previously subjected to the conditions which affect the vitality of its fibrin. Such is often the case, for example, when death occurs from asphyxia, hanging, drowning, or breathing toxical gases, and in cases of poisoning by hydrocyanic acid. Hunter affirms that no coagulation takes place in the blood of animals hunted to death, or of those killed by lightning, or electric shocks, or blows on the epigastrium.”

“Surely when the blood loses its vital heat it must coagulate?”

“A popular error, coagulation is a vital endowment of the fibrinous constituent of the blood, independent of heat : when blood is drawn from the living vessel it coagulates

in a few minutes ; not because its heat departs, but because the phenomenon is a vital property of the fibrin. I now come to the phenomenon of heat discovered by you under the arm-pit.—Doctor Carpenter says the temperature of the body sometimes rises considerably after death, especially in cases of cholera. This has been ascertained by Doctor Bennet Dowler of New Orleans. In one case, for example, the body during life was 104°, after death it rose to 112°. With regard to the body not being stiff: the rigor mortis, or cadaveric stiffness of the muscles, may have been so slight as to pass away without attracting your attention. All circumstances which tend to exhaust or depress the irritability of the muscles, such as death from powerful electric shocks passed through the motor nerves, or from *fright*, induce the early appearance and speedy departure of this state. It remains for me to show that spontaneous movements of the limbs of a body after death are not uncommon. Doctor Carpenter tells us that such muscular contractions sometimes occur

after death from cholera. In one case, related by Doctor Bennet Dowler, of New Orleans, the subject of which was an Irishman, aged twenty-eight years, who had died of yellow fever, the following remarkable series of movements took place spontaneously not long after the cessation of the respiration : first the left arm was carried by a regular motion to the throat, and then to the crown of the head ; the right arm followed the same route on the right side ; the left arm was then carried back to the throat, and thence to the breast, reversing all its original motions, and finally the right hand and arm did exactly the same. Similiar phenomena have been described by Mr. N. B. Ward, Mr. Helps, and Mr. Barlow, as occurring in the bodies of cholera patients. Many circumstances indicate that these movements were due to the inherent contractility of the muscles, and were not in any degree dependent upon the operation of the nervous system ; and Doctor Dowler proved experimentally, by completely separating limbs which exhibited these movements from the

body, that the influence of the nervous system was not in any degree essential to their production."

The officer paused for breath, with an air of great complacence, believing that he had so impressed his auditor with his profound knowledge of physiology, and the utter impossibility of such a learned physician mistaking a body containing the germs of life for a corpse, that no further opposition would be offered to his authority.

But Harcourt arrived at a very different conclusion: "Thus was the unfortunate Abbé Prevost, the French novelist and compiler of travels, ignorantly butchered by well-meaning but obtuse medical men, on the 31st September, 1763. The unfortunate man was found lying apparently dead in the Forest of Chantilly. The doctors pronounced life to be extinct, and proceeded to open him, to discover what he died of. When the dissection had been carried some distance, he revived, but only to die, after a few brief moments of agony, of the wounds he had received. In reference to this case,

Doctor Mayo remarks: 'It does not follow that because a body, happily, does not wake while being dissected, the spark of life is therefore extinct.' The body may be compared to a watch. A watch from some cause so trifling as not to be discoverable, will sometimes come to a dead stop, and when in this state a good shake will often cause it to go on again: so with the human body; and we may infer that so long as no important wheel of the zoönic machine is broken, the cessation of the action of the heart is no proof of death. This is shown by persons having survived burial for many weeks in situations where the lungs could not receive a supply of fresh air. Several cases were recorded when death-trance was epidemic in Hungary, Wallachia, and Servia. With facts such as these before their eyes, how can the medical Officers of Health dare to inter cholera patients almost as soon as the stethoscope fails to detect the action of the heart?"

"Simply because we hold that when the heart ceases to beat, life is extinct."

It was settled that the remains of Harcourt's ill-fated bride should be buried in the picturesque little churchyard of ——— and that Don Pedro should be permitted to arrange the details of the funeral. At the hour appointed for the interment, a dense ground mist lay among the rank grass and nettles and half obliterated mounds of mortality which surrounded the open grave. So imperfect was the light, and so uneven the ground, that the bearers of the body stumbled frequently. The clergyman commenced the burial service, and while the words: "I am the resurrection and the life saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," were being read, Harcourt thought he heard a faint knocking within the coffin, and excitedly called Abernethy's attention to the circumstance. The old man shook his head, attributing the sounds to Expectant Attention: "Faith and Imagination have cheated your ear, my dear young friend. You are a person of a nervous and impressible temperament, and the senses of such are at times completely under

the control of fancy. Believing your late wife's dream of death-trance to have been in all its details the shadow of the future, you *watch* for the sounds of movement of the body *expecting* to hear them, and, the concentration of your attention being sufficient, by the law of Expectant Attention, your senses respond to the suggesting idea."

The burial service proceeded: "O spare me a little that I may recover my strength ere I go hence and be no more seen," when Harcourt interrupted the reader by crying aloud "there! there! there!—there can be no mistake this time—knock—knock—knock. Let me go"—and he struggled to escape from the friendly grasp which restrained him.

The clergyman paused to address a few soothing words to the excited man, and then resumed the service: "Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower, he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one

stay. In the midst of life we are in death."

"Stop, stop," cried Harcourt hoarsely, "and listen to me. In the dream, it was while this part of the burial service was being read that the coffin was being lowered into the grave; in the substance you may observe a similar coincidence: in the dream it was at this critical moment that the entranced began to break the spell which so long had bound her, to whisper, and feebly move her hand. Never shall I forget the night when I sat at her bedside watching her pale working face, while she related to us her dream of prevision: never shall I forget the words of the closing scene. Let me repeat them: 'I am alive, I tried to scream, but the syllables followed only in a soft hiss, which I felt must be drowned by the hollow thud of the stones and earth falling upon my coffin. Faintly came the words: Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of his great mercy, to take unto himself the soul of our dear sister here departed, we therefore commit her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes,

dust to dust. Faintly, and more faintly came the sounds as the earth was heaped in. The air became nearly exhausted, I could not breathe. In my agony and despair I made one more mighty effort to shriek aloud.'"

Harcourt paused and listened intently, for he thought he heard, amid the noise of the falling earth, a faint, smothered shriek. It seemed to him repeated, and he burst from Abernethy, and threw himself into the open grave. They attempted to remove him, but the strength of ten men seemed to nerve his clinging arms. Suddenly, however, the resistance ceased and he was brought to the surface in a state of insensibility.

Inez who had begged to be allowed to attend the funeral, gazed for a moment at the pale, immobile, collapsed face, and then falling upon her knees and raising her face and hands towards heaven bitterly cried : "O God! another victim is already sacrificed! What have I done that death should follow me wherever I go?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE AERIAL TONGUE.—THE STORM.—AT BIANCA'S GRAVE HARCOURT MEETS WITH A STRANGE SURPRISE.

AFTER his return from the funeral, Harcourt retired to his room in great distress of mind. With Bianca's miniature in his hand, he seated himself upon the bed where he remained many hours in painful reverie, gazing at the picture. So complete was his abstraction, that he did not notice the chiming of the hours, until midnight tolled. Then he heard outside what he thought was his wife's voice calling, plaintively, "Fred, Fred, come to me." Upon opening the door, no person was visible. Upon returning to the hall, he again heard the same voice calling out very distinctly and loudly, "Come to me, come to me." This time the speaker seemed to

be in the garden. He went out on the terrace over the loch. The voice now seemed fainter and further away. It continued to cry in a plaintive tone, "Fred, come to me, come away." He followed the sounds. Great God, they were leading him towards the churchyard!

The night was sultry, and that painful unnatural stillness which heralds a tempest was brooding in the air. Before he had proceeded far, signs of atmospheric disturbance became manifest: the spirit of the storm could be heard, at long intervals rustling among the dying autumn leaves, although the ærial breathings were so faint as to be imperceptible to the traveller. These whisperings were succeeded by fitful gusts, with intervals of complete quiescence. A terrible blast to clear the course, a few minutes of startling stillness, and breathless expectation, and then the hurricane came rushing on like a race-horse at speed. In an incredibly short time the whole of the blue vault of heaven was curtained from view, and the

darkness became intense, except when the landscape was for a moment illumined by the lurid glare of the electric fluid which was discharged incessantly by a black cloud over the loch, and after a short zig-zag course sank hissing into the seething waters. The lights, which were no longer visible in the heavens, seemed to have descended to earth; a thousand pale blue stars and moons gleamed in the wide aqueous area on the right; these were the agitated medusæ which in certain states of the atmosphere exhibit their phosphoric lamps even in these seas, and now rendered the outlines of the Gareloch clearly defined.

The voice was heard mingling with the shrieking of the wind, with the groaning of the yielding trees, and with the roaring of the waves which were breaking over the road, plaintively repeating, "Come to me, come to me." At the point where the little road branches off to the ruined church, the voice grew louder as if the utterer were waiting; then became fainter, seemingly moving in the direction of the grave-yard;

and finally stationary in that corner where Bianca's grave was situated, ceasing the moment Harcourt entered the ground.

Not a living thing was visible. Convinced that he had been deceived by his imagination, the bereaved threw himself upon the grave, with his face pressed close into the clay, biting at it, and his hands working among the sods, as if he desired once more to work his way to the side of his late partner. He prayed for death. Like all impressible persons he was constitutionally afraid of death, and trembled whenever the thought of dissolution was forced upon him, and fancy conjured up his own image pale and still, an object of awe and dislike to the living. Yet now death had lost its terrors, and in his utter agony he prayed to die. The storm had passed away carrying the clouds with it, and a balmy air laden with the perfume which herbage gives out on a moist night, especially after a thunder shower, fanned the trees which hemmed in the grave yard, enabling them to shake off their load of water, and

the drops caught by the rays of the moon became transformed to diamonds while falling. The same transmuting power had constructed a path of silver which led from the ruined church down to the loch, and thence across the blue waters to the purple mountain with its dark fringe of pine trees on the opposite side, and a little boat, with a single rower, was paddling in this path. It was an enchanting scene, and deep indeed must have been the despair which caused a lover of nature to pray to leave it. While the impious supplication was still in the air, lingering in a dark angle of the church, which faintly returned it to the utterer, as if anxious for its revocation, a shadow fell upon the grave, and upon nervously looking up, the mourner saw the form of his late wife standing between him and the moon; the face was very pale, but otherwise not much altered. She laid her finger upon her lips, and beckoning him to follow, left the churchyard. Upon reaching the high road, she stopped, and gazing intently into his countenance, abruptly asked him if he loved

her sufficiently to give up his family for her sake : mother, and sisters, and friends. The reply was in the affirmative. She then made him promise never to ask for the history of the period which had elapsed since midnight of the twelfth of August ; never to allude to her apparent death, or to the events which led to it. There was an awful secret connected with her which he would learn only too soon. She was about to bring him to a house where every one would seem to behave in a very strange manner. He must promise never to resent or notice in any way circumstances which might seem to him extraordinary in the conduct of the landlady, the guests, or the servants ; he must never exhibit either anger, surprise, or curiosity. He must consent to be guided by her in all his actions, and never question the propriety or expediency of her decisions. He must never ask the reason of anything she did, although it should seem to him strange, irregular, or even wrong. He must never leave the house without special permission, never show himself at the windows, or

attempt to communicate with his friends. He must never read a newspaper if chance should throw one in his way. And if circumstances should ever transpire seeming to prove that she had abused his confidence, was a false, foresworn, unhappy wretch, a miserable and contemptible being, an offender against the laws which bind society together, guilty of a crime for which justice enacts her heaviest penalty, he must have sufficient faith to believe in her innocence.

Harcourt was conducted by his wife to an hotel in an obscure street in Glasgow. Here several circumstances occurred which gave him great uneasiness: for instance the landlady and the servants all seemed afraid of him. They would neither look at nor speak to his wife, and frequently tried to jostle her. If he ordered them to do anything for her, they looked alarmed, said "yes sir, certainly sir," but never did it. They broke in with irrelevant remarks while she was speaking to him. If he addressed her in the presence of the waiter the man would turn away his head and giggle. If he addressed her in the

presence of one of the maids, the maid would scream and run away. It always happened that when he was in animated conversation with her, the door would open a few inches, eyes would be seen inquisitively peeping in, and sounds of suppressed laughter be heard.

Bianca became very ill, but would not hear of a doctor being sent for. Believing her life to be in danger, Harcourt secretly despatched the waiter for medical assistance, and Doctor Campbell was promptly in attendance.

"There is your patient," whispered the anxious husband, pointing to his wife, who was breathing heavily, and tossing her arms about upon the bed, in unquiet slumber. "She was very unwilling to have a medical man called in. Perhaps, therefore, you had better take advantage of her present unconscious condition to make what bodily examination you think necessary, as she may object afterwards, for she is very wilful."

The doctor glanced at the patient, and

then turning abruptly to Harcourt, fixed upon him a pair of piercing black eyes, which gleamed with strange meaning. The object of this unwavering gaze grew nervous and confused, and at last said, with a white and quivering lip which belied his words, "Fear not to tell me, I have courage to bear the worst—I see it in your face: there is no hope—she is dying?"

"I pray to God," returned the other earnestly, "that it may be so—I pray that she may soon leave you, and that you may never see her again."

Harcourt made no reply: the mystery was about to be divulged, the circumstances which seemed extraordinary to be explained; but terror had usurped the place of curiosity. The words, "I hope to God it may be so—I pray you may never see her again," rang in his ear like the death-knell of his dearest hopes. What had she done? Had she been false to him? Did the doctor recognise her as some notoriously bad character. He would not believe any charge, no matter what evidence might be brought against her.

CHAPTER V.

HARCOURT PROPOSES TO HIS COUSIN DI BEAU-
CLERC.—IS REFUSED.—COMES INTO A
STRANGE PROPERTY.—STARTS FOR INACCES-
SIBLE ISLAND.

HARCOURT returned home, but it seemed only to die. His outward symptoms of malady argued no acute or alarming disease, but slowness of pulse, absence of appetite, daily increasing atrophy, or wasting of the body, black circles round the eyes, deadly paleness, constant depression of spirits, distressing nervousness—all his symptoms seemed to draw their origin from some hidden cause which the patient was determined to conceal. His constitution was evidently being undermined and broken down, not by any physical malady, but by some moral disorder—he was being crushed by the weight of some awful secret; the deep gloom of the unfortunate youth—the

embarrassment, which he could not conceal from his friends—the briefness and obvious constraint with which he answered their interrogatories seemed to prove this view of his case to be correct. In vain his mother tried to obtain his confidence, to learn, if possible, the source of that secret grief which was gnawing his heart and sucking his life-blood ; he repulsed her advances, evaded all her artifices, and finally withdrew himself nearly altogether from her society, absenting himself from home for many days at a time, and in the intervals keeping his room.

Thinking that the society of young persons might produce in her son a more healthful state of mind, Mrs. Harcourt several times had his cousins Diana Beauclerc and Beatrice Howard on a visit. To both these girls the youth was tenderly attached. Yet even in their company, he was subject to fits of gloom, and of inexplicable terror. During these, his frame would grow rigid, his eyes fixed on some particular spot, and crying “ she comes, she comes.” He would fall into a deep swoon.

There is a rock in the Atlantic, marked on the map "Inaccessible Island." Well does it deserve its name, it can only be approached in very calm weather, and when the adventurous mariner *has* reached it, in vain may he sail round seeking some landing place ; beetling precipices of immense height facing him upon every side, proclaim the Island *Inaccessible*. There are few obstacles, however, which a determined man cannot overcome, if he can afford to undertake the task. Mr. Verner, a maternal uncle of Harcourt's, knowing the Island to be the breeding place of myriads of sea-birds, albatrosses, boobies, sea-hens, petrels, and such like, who there were enabled to rear their broods, without fear of being disturbed by man, and arguing that the Island must be covered to a great depth with valuable guano, became filled with the idea of making a fortune by importing the manure to England, and invited his nephew to join in the venture. Against the advice of his friends, who said that the expedition must prove the destruction of all concerned in it,

the young man eagerly accepted the offer. He was now in that despairing state of mind where there is a yearning for change and adventure, and a belief that freedom from mental pain can be found amongst exciting and novel scenes, and he hoped to escape from that mysterious and awful persecution which rendered life a burden to him. Diana Beauclerc and Beatrice Howard went down to Greenwich to see him off, and accompanied him as far as the Nore. When they dropped into the return boat, it was with the melancholy conviction that they had seen the last of poor Fred in this world.

Many years rolled away during which nothing was heard of the youth or the partners of his wild expedition, and it was supposed that all had perished.

Meantime Annesly lost his wife. There was a mystery hanging over her death which the widower would not clear up ; and it was generally supposed that driven to despair by the belief that her presence was fatal to everything she loved, the unfortunate woman had committed suicide.

In the course of time the widower seemed to recover his usual spirits. One day while sorting some old papers, he accidentally came upon the portrait of his cousin Diana Beauclerc taken when she was little more than a child. He was softened, pleasant memories of youth came crowding upon him, and out of them arose a desire to see his old play-mate once more.

BOOK II.

The eyes desert the naked skull,
The mouldering flesh the bone,
Till Helen's lily arms entwine
A ghastly skeleton.

Half seen by fits, by fits half heard,
Pale spectres flit along ;
Wheel round the maid in dismal dance,
And howl the funeral song.

With many a shriek and cry, whiz round
The birds of midnight, scared ;
And rustling like autumnal leaves
Unhallowed ghosts were heard.

Scott's William and Helen.

CHAPTER I.

ANNESLY MEETS AN OLD LOVE.—THE PRO-
POSAL.—“I DIDN'T SAY NO.”

DIANA BEAUCLERC shook out the folds of her black silk dress, regretting that time had not permitted the donning of the azure *chef d'œuvre* which that clever *artiste* Mrs. De Monde, of New Bond Street, had sent home the day before. The remembrance of the dazzling contrast afforded by her *blonde* complexion to the sombre but elegant garment which she wore somewhat consoled her, and with a self-satisfied little sigh she placed both her pretty plump hands upon her fair forehead, smoothed down a ripple in the sunbeams which nestled there, and tried to imagine what her cousin would say to her and what she ought to say in return; for it was now eleven years since she had seen him. It was not that she was in the smallest degree nervous at the prospect of

meeting her old lover, her pause at the door was merely to decide upon the most graceful and dignified manner of receiving his advances, and the exact amount and nature of the privileges to which a former intimacy entitled him. She decided that, as they had not met for so many years, if he would insist upon claiming that sweet privilege of old acquaintance, the kiss, she could not refuse him, and then, after taking another survey of herself and finding everything *comme il faut*, opened the door and floated into the room.

Annesly, observing her chin and mouth dimple with a smile of encouragement, went boldly forward and kissed her; and as his lips lingered in the sweet contact (much longer than friendship warranted) he mentally registered a vow to make this beautiful creature his wife.

At this time Di was stopping with her friend, Mrs. Mowbray, who resided with her husband in Jasmine Villa, Twickenham. Jasmine Villa was a snug little cottage *orné*, standing in its own grounds which were laid

out in imitation of those at Hampton Court, and contained a labyrinth leading to a romantic bower covered with jasmine and eglantine. Hautville alleged that the very aspect and atmosphere of this bower were suggestive of the Queen of passions; "a Cupid peeps out of every bunch of eglantine" he said, "and a Hymen lurks in the zephyr which robs the jasmine of its perfume; five minutes in it with a pretty girl is love; ten, passion; fifteen, by moonlight, a proposal."

On the Christmas day following the scene described in the commencement of this chapter, Annesly arrived at Jasmine Villa a little before tea-hour, and succeeded in inveigling Di into the jasmine bower. Not unwillingly she went, for intuition told her that he was going to propose, and she was always glad to receive this tribute to her charms. He laid his hand upon his temples as if they throbbed with intense pain. Di gazed at him with astonishment, for she had thought that the pain was in quite another place, and would have expected to see him

lay his hand upon his heart if he wished to indicate the seat of the disorder.

"I have been since four o'clock this morning," said the barrister, "pouring over an intricate case of title, and I have a severe headache in consequence and feel quite done up."

"Why did it do itself up?—Why did it not send the naughty brief away?" inquired Di, assuming an affectionate lisp.

"It will not do to refuse ten guinea briefs. I fear I cannot return with you to Brighton as your Aunt has so kindly proposed. I must wait until the vacation, for it will not do to be out of the way while these kind of things are flying about," and opening a parcel he produced a brief marked ten guineas, explaining, as he untied the red tape which bound it, that he had brought it with him to read in the railway so as to economise time.

"It looks intricate," said Di, with a half smile. "How clever you must be to understand what it is all about! And is this parcel another brief?" pointing to a small package

which Annesly now produced from his pocket.

The parcel proved to be a morrocco case containing a bracelet: a golden firmament in which were set several emerald and diamond stars.

"Oh! it is too beautiful! it is too valuable! I do not think I ought to keep it! I do not think Aunt Ethel will allow me to keep it!" exclaimed the girl, while Annesly was fastening the glittering circle upon her beautiful wrist.

"O my head—that confounded attorney—my head! my head! my head!"

Annesly's temples were again bathed with eau-de-cologne, which seemed to give him much relief. During the operation he introduced his practice. "If this headache terminates in a fatal brain fever," he said, "the attorney who sent me this brief" (tapping the ten-pounder) "ought to be indicted for manslaughter. He might have prepared and sent it into me a week ago, but attorneys are a procrastinating set of rascals who always prefer waiting until the eleventh

hour; and you see the consequences. Oh! my head!"

Di was all sympathy and eau-de-cologne.

"You would hardly guess how much I made by my practice in the first year I was called to the bar? Only five pounds—ha! ha! ha! But the attorneys are beginning to know me, and my practice is increasing rapidly. Guess how much it increased last year? Two hundred pounds! and, supposing it to go on increasing in the geometrical progression, next year the increase will be four hundred pounds, the year after sixteen hundred, and so on."

Di expressed delight at this very satisfactory state of affairs in appropriate terms.

The soft influences which filled the bower: the odor of the jasmine, the murmuring sound of the river hard by, the mellowed light, and perhaps the twinkling of the jewelled stars in the golden firmament awakened all the poetry of Di's nature; her tones became tender and manner subdued. Annesly seizing the auspicious moment, told his love. Di made no reply, but stooped down and

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commenced busily lacing her boot which had become unfastened.

“‘Yes?’ Do I hear ‘yes?’” he asked.

“I didn’t say ‘yes.’”

“Ah! surely you do not mean ‘no?’”

“I didn’t say ‘no,’” she replied, looking up with a smile.

“Then you must mean yes: I will speak to your Aunt this evening and ask her to consent to an engagement, and—”

“Do nothing of the kind,” exclaimed Di, starting up in alarm, leaving her boot still unlaced; you would only get me into a scrape and Aunt would never consent. Don’t talk about it any more—at least not for some time. Oh! here comes the Beast to call us to tea,” and she ran off into the house.

The person alluded to in this disrespectful manner was her cousin Mr. Hautville. A young man of some twenty-five years of age who had lately sold out of the Xth Dragoons; not the 10th, but the algebraical X, standing for an unknown quantity. He was also known among the ladies as the loathsome creature; but these strange titles were

merely pet names, for being very good-natured and talkative, he was a favourite with the sex.

Annesly was not discouraged, though he wisely resolved to allow a short time to elapse before he again pressed the engagement.

“ What was Annesly saying to you here, before tea ?” asked Lord Plantagenet, laughing. “ Something must have happened, for *he* looked crest-fallen as he emerged from the maze ; and *you* flushed and disconcerted.”

“ He was proposing to me,” said Di, averting her head.

“ And you ?”

The girl was silent. She plucked a sprig of jasmine and pulled it to pieces.

“ Did you refuse him ?”

“ I didn’t say ‘ no.’ ”

“ Then am I to congratulate you ?”

There was no reply.

“ Is the proposal to be made known to your Aunt Ethel ?”

“ No.”

"Did he ask permission to speak to her on the subject?"

"Yes."

"And you refused?"

No answer.

"I feel much relieved," said his lordship. "I see now that you have no intention of throwing yourself away upon him. You are much too good for him. There is nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see you well married; nothing which would make me more unhappy than to see you ally yourself with a man who at present is little better than a pauper, and who has not wit enough to render it likely he will ever make a name for himself at the bar."

"The attorneys are beginning to know him," rejoined Di, laughing, "and his practice is increasing in the geometrical progression. So much has his chamber business enlarged lately, that he has been obliged to give up going circuit. Mr. Mowbray the other day saw him receive a brief marked five guineas; and while Aunt Ethel and I were at his chambers, we saw several briefs

come in. And only think, he has got two pupils, each representing a premium of three hundred guineas !”

“Pooh,” observed Plantagenet, “his practice is all a sham : his briefs all dummies. He would have proposed to you before were he not deterred from coming to the point by the fear that you would refer him to Aunt Ethel, and that she would immediately make inquiries and ascertain that his practice *at the bar* is nearly *nil*, which discovery would, of course, be fatal to his hopes. But Cupid at last came to his aid, and suggested that if he gave up going circuit and attending the courts in London, on the plea that conveying business was more remunerative than court business, he might romance without detection about the extent of his practice, for who then could tell, with certainty, what business he did or did not receive in his chambers. Cupid also suggested that it would be well to arrange matters so that fictitious briefs should be brought in whenever any of your friends called at his chambers, and that the attention of the

friends should be casually called to the amount of the fees ; and that it would be a good plan to get pupils by offering to take them gratis, making it a condition that the world should not know upon what terms they (the pupils) were received ; each *eleve* would then represent a large fee in the mind of the prudent Ethel. To build up a large fictitious practice would, however, require time, and Cupid represented that you might not wait unless you were bound by a promise, and had something tangible to wait for. 'Go then, at once, and propose,' whispered the imp, 'and when the girl refers you to her aunt, tell that prudent old lady that you are not in a position to marry *now*, but that your practice is rapidly growing, and that at the end of a couple of years you expect to be in receipt of an income of over one thousand per annum: this will induce Aunt Ethel to sanction an engagement without driving her to an immediate investigation; and then with the facilities afforded to the *fiancé*, you will have many opportunities of compromising the girl in the eyes of the world so as to render

it impossible for her to draw back ever, I shall say no more about him ever you need advice come to believe me, I take the deepest in your welfare. Ah," he added with "if I were only twenty years nobody should have you but myself

Di laughed, kept up a smile until she gained her own room; and then she lay herself on the bed and wept bitterly. "I will never believe that I would not have one but him," she sobbed—"never, I am positively engaged—never perhaps I am actually a wife."

By the time she had relieved her grief by a good cry, the supper bell rang and she went down stairs.

it impossible for her to draw back. However, I shall say no more about him; but if ever you need advice come to me; for, believe me, I take the deepest interest in your welfare. Ah," he added with a sigh, "if I were only twenty years younger, nobody should have you but myself."

Di laughed, kept up a smile until she had gained her own room; and then she threw herself on the bed and wept bitterly. "He will never believe that I would marry any one but him," she sobbed—"never until I am positively engaged—never perhaps until I am actually a wife."

By the time she had relieved her feelings by a good cry, the supper bell rang, and she went down stairs.

CHAPTER II.

“ POOR WILLY ” — PHANTASMATIC ECSTASY —
INDIAN HEMP — DOCTOR ABERNETHY CON-
JURES UP AN APPARITION.

A LARGE party were collected around the supper table when Diana entered, and placed herself beside Annesley.

The subject on the conversational tapis was the singularly frequent occurrence of persons—or phantoms in their likeness—being seen at the exact moment of their deaths by friends far away from the scene of dissolution. Some of the company argued that these occurrences were too numerous to admit of being placed in the category of coincidence, and too well authenticated to be treated as fictions. Others accounted for these phenomena by supposing the mind, under certain conditions, to have the power of detaching itself from the body, and acting with the instantaneity of thought upon other minds at a distance, that this is a provision of nature

to enable human beings, when in great peril, or when burthened with any weighty secret, to communicate with their friends at a distance, independent of those laws of time and space by which the physical is fettered by nature ; and that a desire for sympathy or aid will always throw the body into this state of trance in which the spirit is set free to gratify its longings. Others held that these ghostly visits do not come within the domain of the natural, but that the Divine Being, in his infinite mercy, moved by the prayers and anguish of the departing, occasionally suspends physical laws to grant the request of the suppliant.

Being apropos to the subject under discussion, Lord Plantagenet asked Beatrice to sing her favourite ballad, "Poor Willy," and in order, as he alleged, to heighten the effect, threw open the shutters and extinguished the candles. The girl good-humouredly acceded to the request ; and placing herself at the piano, played a wild and plaintive symphony, after which, in a

magnificent contralto voice, and with exquisite feeling, she sang the following verses :—

POOR WILLY.

Deserted by all the false friends he had trusted,

No voice save the forest's to echo his sigh,

In the wilds of Australia young Willy was wandering,

When, sick and despairing, he sank down to die.

Ah, where is the bright dream with which the youth
started,

Exchanged for the fond lips which pressed him to stay?

'Twas a dream, and alas, as a dream has departed,

While the lips of those dear ones are still far away.

His poor feet are naked, his gay clothes are ragged,

His fair childish brow is all furrowed by care,

And transparent the trembling hands raised to the
forehead.

To shade the blue eyes from the fierce noon-sun's
glare.

But he sees not the desert, far, far from the wild scene

The thoughts of the poor weary wanderer roam :

God grant me, he prays, that my eyes, ere death
close them,

May rest but one moment on the dear ones at home.

Here's a health to the absent, and many a Christmas

May our Wanderer return'd, with us merrily pass,

Cry those dear ones—when, lo! they behold with
amazement,

22 PSYCHO-EXONEURAL PHENOMENA.

A careworn face pressing close to the glass.
'Tis our Willy, they cry, and they rush to the
window—

Seek not, ye bright eyes, for no Willy is there ;
Nor think, ye fond ears, that faint whisper responsive
Is more than the sigh of the drear midnight air.

Yet weep not, for swiftly is coming a meeting
When your arms round the wanderer again may be
cast,

Where dreams are not fleeting, where no hot suns are
beating

The poor restless spirit seeks shelter at last.
Sigh softly, ye sad winds, the sycamore bending,
And hushed be your whispers, ye voices of night,
There's a spell in the prayers of affection ascending
Might charm back a soul in its heavenward flight.

While the last notes of the song were
blending with the chimes of the mid-night
hour, a shriek from Diana directed the
attention of the company to the window,
where a pallid face was observed to be
pressing against the glass, looking like one
of Rembrandt's heads peeping out of its
black canvas. It was gone in a moment; but
not before everyone in the room had recog-
nised the features of Frederick Harcourt.

Abernethy endeavoured to calm the agitation of the ladies by assuring them that there was nothing supernatural in the apparition. "I think I can explain," he said, "what has happened. There occurs occasionally, while we are perfectly conscious, in perfect possession of our faculties, a state of body having this extraordinary property, that if the mind be occupied by a powerful mental impression, a waking dream embodying or suggested by that impression will result, in which the phantoms evoked have a more or less life-like appearance. If a person while in this curious state visits a place reported to be haunted, the ghost will appear to him with all the circumstances by which it is rumoured to be accompanied, and act its little drama. Every powerful emotion predisposes to this state; grief, love, surprise, despair, hate, fear, superstitious awe, religious enthusiasm carried to excess, and, notably, solemn music, and such wild weird strains as those with which my friend Miss Beatrice accompanied her touching verses. This state is exceedingly infec-

tious, or shall I say morally contagious, as we have lately had a notable example in the case of the Ballybay apparition, and it has been known even to spread over a whole continent, when the public mind was predisposed to it by panic, religious excitement, or physical suffering. In former days when people believed in the power of spells, invocations, and enchantments to call up spirits, the performance of such by a person in whom they induced awe and expectation was sufficient to bring on phantasmatic ecstasy. It was thus that the sorceries of the magicians of old were effected. It is in precisely a similar way that the remarkable phenomena developed by the modern Electro-Biologist are produced: the manipulations, pawings, stroakings, et cetera, by which the mythical Animal Magnetism is supposed to be transmitted to the subject, only act by exciting the Imagination until it obtains power to rule his senses and the will. The minds of the patients then are swayed by the ideas suggested by the operator in precisely the same way that the mind of the

ghost-seer is swayed by the superstition which possessed his mind when he visited the haunted place. The same state is produced by the Brahmin and the Turk without the intervention of any 'Biological' operator, or any 'magnetic' pawings or 'stroakings' or other mystic tom-fooleries. The Brahmin brings on this state of ecstasy by sitting motionless for a long time with his eyes fixed upon the point of his nose, and his thoughts directed to the Heaven with which he wishes to communicate. Trance ecstasy soon coming on, he sees celestial visions, and hears celestial voices. Religious enthusiasts of other countries, and of by-gone centuries, have predisposed themselves to trance ecstasy by long fasting and other mortifications. The Orientals produce it by means of the intoxicating and phantasmatic resin of the plant *Cannabis Sativa Indica* (Indian Hemp) made up into a sweet meat which they call hacschish; the Imagination under the influence of this drug becomes in such a state of exaltation that the subject, or patient, sees seemingly em-

bodied in flesh the train of ideas which possesses his mind. The Turk, like the Brahmin, then dreams of *his Heaven*; joyous visions present themselves, and phantom hours of exquisite beauty play about him. But without any drug at all, an impressible person can conjure up any phantom he pleases, by shutting himself up alone, keeping his body quite still, fasting, and all the time keeping his mind so completely fixed on the desiderated vision, that every other idea shall be excluded. At the end of a period (the time depending upon the mental and physical constitution of the would-be phantom seer) the mental picture will seem to assume form and substance. The next time the vision is summoned it will come sooner and seem more real. And so on, until it can be evoked at will, and in a moment; such is the force of habit. The end, however, will be melancholy: other visions less agreeable will eventually come unbidden, the reason will grow weak as the imagination waxes powerful, and the poor visionary will become unable to discriminate

between the true and the false. My late worthy and learned friend, Sir David Brewster, when treating this subject in his admirable letters on natural magic, suggests a plan by which a patient troubled by phantoms may be able to distinguish them from real objects. It is this: compress the eyeball with the fingers so as to throw the eye out of focus, and if the object appear single, it is a phantom; if double, a reality. But I must confess I consider the arguments of the eminent philosopher by which he arrives at this conclusion to be wholly fallacious, and unfortunately the experiment has never been tried. In the interests of science, therefore, I would earnestly request any person present who may again see a phantom to make the experiment, and let me know the result, for which I will be exceedingly grateful, and I deeply deplore that the past opportunity remained unimproved."

The door of the little blue room opening into the drawing-room was ajar, leaving a tall space of six inches of black darkness visible. This space attracted the eyes of

little doubt that beneath the touch of this potent enchanter phantoms would start up. But there was this danger, a liability to a recurrence of the disorder might be left behind, and the spectre come again unbidden ; and therefore it was he could not adopt the suggestion of Mr. Annesly.

The curiosity of the company being aroused, they all professed the utmost desire to test the power of this remarkably drug. Beatrice ran up stairs for the Doctor's medicine chest, and then with those coaxing arts, which not even an octogenarian could resist, induced the weak old man to comply with the general request.

The drug was administered to every one but Diana, and as soon as the company seemed under its influence, the Doctor inquired whose phantom they would wish to behold. Annesly said he would like to see the phantom of his dear deceased wife. Abernethy observed that it would be difficult to make all the company see her, since her person was unknown to many of them. In those who knew her not, Imagination would

have a double work to perform ; firstly, to create the conception or image in the mind, secondly, to present it to the eye. While in those who knew her, it would only have to reproduce the image. However, as it would be instructive to note the discrepancies between the created image and the reproduced image, he would endeavour to produce the phantom called for. He then desired Beatrice to play the air which had been so successful in conjuring up a spectre in the likeness of Fred Harcourt, and directed the company to fix their eyes upon the handle of the door of the little blue room. While they were thus engaged, he made passes before their faces, manipulated their organs, stroaked their eyes, and then in a loud and peremptory voice, said:—

“Inez Annesly, I command you to appear.”

“The surprise of the Witch of Endor at the unexpected success of her incantation could not have been greater than that of the worthy physician at the phenomena which he beheld follow his invocation ; for so often

had he failed to produce sensorial ecstasy in himself by means of hemp, that he did not expect to see anything himself. The handle seemed to him to turn, the door slowly to revolve upon its hinges, and a form in the similitude of the deceased to appear upon the threshold. There was a loud cry of amazement from the company, which proved to him that they saw the figure also.

CHAPTER III.

DI AND HER LOVE LETTERS.—ANNESLY
TELLS DI HER FAULTS.—PLANTAGENET
EDITS A LOVE LETTER TO "MY BILL."—
REAPPEARANCE OF THE APPARITION OF
INEZ ANNESLY.

WHEN Annesly explained that he did not aspire to an immediate union, but only to an engagement which might be indefinitely prolonged, Di gave him permission to speak to Aunt Ethel on the subject. Aunt Ethel, thinking it a good thing for her niece to have a barrister whose income was annually increasing in the geometrical progression, and whom the attorneys were beginning to know, to fall back upon in case nobody better offered before beauty began to fade or reputation to get tarnished, consented, after expressing conviction that long engagements are mischievous and foolish (as all guardians do when thus appealed to) and bargaining that the correspondence should be confined within

certain narrow limits. When Di's friends heard of the engagement they were greatly amused; and all agreed that the affair was merely a ruse of the artful Di to spur the procrastinating Plantagenet (who had now been eight years dangling in the girl's train unable to make up his mind) into an immediate proposal.

Though Annesly's practice was increasing (in the geometrical progression), and therefore the calls upon his time were, of course, daily becoming more urgent and numerous, yet he did not allow business to interfere with the whole duty of the absent lover—letter writing. The claims of love are paramount: "All other things must give place—even the attorneys," he wrote to Di "when-e'er a lady's in the case." His conduct as a correspondent was beyond all praise, his letters came two and three a-day, and were voluminous as numerous. Indeed, it was reported that he kept Beauclerc Villa in waste paper; that with his love missives Mary lit the fire, and Jones the candles; that the cook covered a hole in a pane of

glass with one, and the lady's maid stuffed the toes of a pair of boots, which were too large, with another; that Aunt Ethel used them as curl papers, and Aunt Maud for purposes of general utility. Diana was said to be the only person who threw them aside, with contempt, as utterly worthless, or took them up only to ridicule them. Sometimes indeed, when Annesly was almost driven to madness by her neglect, she wrote to him an iteration of the old story [leaving the blame on Aunt Ethel] which by long practice she was now able to get on a single sheet of note paper, writing with a space of an inch and a half between the lines. So time went on: Annesly's letters continued to be kicked about the house, and to turn up every now and then in the most extraordinary places.

One day Plantagenet picked up one in the garden at Beauclerc Villa, and on examination found that the seal was unbroken and the postmark old.

"Some of your valuable correspondence has been discovered in the garden, Di," said

Plantagenet, laying the letter before the owner, whom he found alone in the drawing-room. "The envelope was quite dry, although the ground upon which it lay was moist with dew, the letter, therefore, must have been dropped this morning:" some idea connected with the foundling appeared to tickle his lordship, for he cachinnated gently.

"At what are you laughing?" asked Di, who was uncertain whether she ought to laugh herself or appear offended—"At what are you laughing? this is only a letter from my Bill—I put it into my pocket a fortnight ago and then forgot all about it. I suppose I must have dropped it when I was giving Tiny a run this morning."

"But the seal is unbroken—you have not read it yet," he tapped the waif with his finger, and smiled knowingly.

"No—I had not time. He is always writing to me," returned the girl, shrugging her shoulders.

"Ha! ha! ha! do you often keep his letters a fortnight in your pocket before you open them?"

"No : sometimes I open them in a week, and sometimes I open them at once, and sometimes—sometimes I don't open them at all—I leave them on the mantelpiece and they get lost, or put them in a drawer and forget them—why does he write so often !"

"It is very inconsiderate of him."

"And he expects me to answer every time—and is so angry when I don't !"

"How unreasonable."

"Poor Annesly," exclaimed his lordship with assumed compassion. "It is too bad that his letters should remain unread and unanswered—may I read this one to you ?"

"If you like, I don't care," replied Di, laughing.

Annesly in his letter announced that he had taken a "conventional cot," on the road leading from Kew to Richmond, facing the Observatory fields, and with a view of the river. He then went on to give a humorous account of his search for the conventional cot, and to describe, with many jokes, its accommodations.

"Whenever Bill tries to be funny, he only

succeeds in making himself ridiculous," said Di, curling her lip, and tossing her head, with infinite contempt. "I do not know of any more melancholy spectacle than Bill trying to be funny."

"I confess poor Annesly's pleasantries are rather dismal."

"He positively makes me feel angry when he tries to be funny—he puts me in a passion—he does indeed. I always feel as if I would like to box his ears when he tries to be funny."

"Ahem ! Well I'll skip the fun as you don't appreciate it. Hum-hum-hum-hum.—You are losing a great deal of capital fun—hum. Now he grows serious—now we come to a part which is not at all funny ; he says : 'I pass on to a subject—I was going to say less pleasing, but that expression would be incorrect, and truth obliges me to substitute—painful in the extreme—a subject I repeat, painful in the extreme. I hope—nay, I trust you may be able to explain it to my satisfaction. It is this : You do not display that ardour when corresponding

with me which love demands, and which the nature of the relation existing between us renders proper, and, indeed, conventional. Some of my letters you do not answer at all, and the remainder are replied to but briefly, and at long intervals. How is this ? How is it that when you sit down to write to me the post is always going ? How is it that you are worried to death by people, whom you 'cannot offend,' coming in whenever you commence a reply to one of my letters ? Doubtless, you can furnish me with a satisfactory explanation. I would that these were the only matters of which I have to complain, but, unfortunately, there are others still more painful : reports have gone abroad that Plantagenet, and Hautville, and Captain Banbury, and Mr. Norton, are constantly at Beauclerc Villa, and that you give them more of your society than is prudent, considering what a censorious world it is, and what ill-natured reports your conduct has already given rise to, I merely state what I have heard, and call upon you for an explanation. You know my opinion of

these persons with whom your name is coupled : Plantagenet is a disgrace to the peerage : Hautville, a low, vulgar fellow ; Banbury, an ill-bred coxcomb ; Norton, a cad—in fact, they are not gentlemen—they may deceive you, but not me—I can almost smell out a gentleman.

“‘ I feel that I have been very badly used, but whether you or your Aunt Ethel are most to blame, I do not know. I trust your letter will prove that you are more sinned against than sinning. I met Miss P——, the heiress, yesterday ; she is as ugly, and as fond of me as ever. ’ ”

“ You had better take care, Di,” remarked his lordship, laughing ; “ that allusion to Miss P—— is ominous. Bill is not a man to be trifled with.”

Di laughed, and tossed her head, some *badinage* ensued, and then his lordship resumed the reading of the letter.

“ ‘ In looking over the orthography and syntax of your last letter, I was pleased to find that both are much improved since the time I first commenced to criticise your

spelling and the grammatical construction of your sentences. Therefore do not be discouraged by the errors, orthographical and syntactical, which I am about to point out as existing in your last letter—Rome was not built in a day.' ” [Here followed a long list of errors, orthographical and syntactical.]

Diana bit her lip, her face flushed, her eyes sparkled. Her labour in correcting, by aid of a Murray and a dictionary, all her letters to Plantagenet until they were (in her opinion) models of correct composition, was now all thrown away : Annesly had exposed her educational deficiencies, and again she felt as if she would like to box his ears. She quite forgot that it was her own breach of confidence which had betrayed her ; quite forgot that when Annesly had proposed to improve her syntax and orthography by pointing out the solecisms and blunders of spelling in her letters to him, she had gladly and gratefully assented, and had even found amusement in trying to solve the grammatical questions which he sent her.

Plantagenet resumed the reading of the

letter : “ You ask me in your last letter to tell you the faults in your character ; you say you hold with Burns that no one can see themselves as others see them, and that therefore you are anxious to see yourself with other people’s eyes, you charge me not to shrink from telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, however painful that truth may be. At risk of offending you, I will do so, concealing nothing. These are your faults : ’ ”

Before Plantagenet had read half through the list, which was a very long one, Diana stopped abruptly.

“ Do you really think I have all the faults that he says I have ? ” faltered Di, trying to smile, though her lip was quivering, the tears swelling in her eyes, and her bosom heaving with suppressed sobs.

Plantagenet tenderly encircled her with his arm, calling her, “ my child,” and, by delicate and judicious flattery, soon restored her to her former good opinion of herself ; for which restoration she was so genuinely grateful that she kissed him, then burst into

tears, and, hiding her head upon his shoulder, sobbed aloud. When her self-possession and cheerfulness were restored, Plantagenet proposed that she should answer Annesly's letter forthwith.

"I won't," she said ; "I'll never write to him again."

"The punishment would be too great for the offence. Poor fellow, I sympathize with him, and rather than he should be mortified in the manner you propose, I will myself indite a love letter of the most tender description, and you shall copy it out, and sign it with your name, and Jones shall take it to the post forthwith. Thus will I return good for evil. Thus will Annesly be made happy by the very man of whom he speaks so harshly, and whom he threatens with a terrible vengeance."

Diana laughed at the suggestion. Plantagenet wrote as follows :—

"My Bill,

"I am not to blame for not answering your dear letters. I do write very often, although I have so much to do ; but I am

certain my letters must go astray in the post ; which accounts for your often not hearing from me for a long time. Ever so many people are complaining of the post just now. That letter in which you describe your charming Villa near Kew (do not you think Kew rather out of the way for a barrister with a large practice ?) went astray for a long time ; but I assure you I answered it the very day I opened it. How can you be so jealous about Plantagenet, when you know he is old enough to be my grandfather ? He is a great friend of Aunt Ethel's, and she *will* ask him. I am barely civil to him. Is your pretty Villa near Kew *quite* detached ? Your facetious remarks about the mutton chops, and your pun about the doves, are very funny. I like boating and fishing ; they are divine ! I think the ' Little Red Canoe ' a pretty name. I *would* like to catch salmon. How nice it must be for you, now that the attorneys are beginning to know you. I am sure Tomkins must be a clever man ; but I think I would like the other fellow best:

it was so generous of him to give you a ten guinea brief and pay you a compliment at the same time. How can I help Lord Plantagenet, and Captain Banbury, and Hal Hautville being always here ; it is Aunt Ethel's fault ; and if I am obliged to sit in the room with them (which I suppose is what you call giving them much of my society), that also is Aunt Ethel's fault. People may spread ill-natured reports if they like ; I don't care. Lord Plantagenet, Captain Banbury, and Hal Hautville, are all you say. If you hear any more ill-natured reports about me, remember it is all Aunt Ethel's fault. What do I care for Miss P. You may marry her to-morrow if you like. You know very well that I know all about orthography and syntax, and when I make a mistake it is through inadvertence, and not through ignorance. In the present case, I believe my syntax was quite correct, and that you mistook the flourish I put to the *o* in *who* for an *m*, for of course I know all about relative pronouns and nominative cases. As to the orthographical error, it

must have been caused by my hand shaking while I was writing the letter, so that the *e* was popped instead of the *i*—to suppose that I did not know how to spell that word would be absurd. My Bill, how can you be so unkind? Your letter was a mere catalogue of faults, and a tiresome lecture commenting on them. Anybody would have guessed it came from a schoolmaster; nobody, that it came from a lover. I don't think you can care for me! I don't think you can love me. * * * *

Diana laughed immoderately while his lordship tacked together pieces of sentiment in true love letter style, gradually getting up the tenderness as he proceeded, and terminating in a wild burst of affection. The concluding paragraph ran thus:—"Oh! why was I ever born to annoy you, best and dearest of men? Do you not wish—oh yes! full well I know you often wish you had never known me. I thought I was doing all I could to please you. But no. When shall I ever be what you wish me to be? Never! never! My Bill, will you never trust me—she who is to be

your wife. If I say the post is just going, it is because it *really* is just going; but though I must dispatch this at once, I will send you a longer letter to-morrow."

"Oh! don't say that," exclaimed Diana.

"Why? If you do not write again for three weeks, you can say your letters have gone astray in the post, or that they have been carried off by that phantom which was summoned by Doctor Abernethy, and which I learn he is not able to dismiss. Is it true that it has appeared again?"

"Alas! too true. One day, about noon, Aunt Ethel was walking with Bill in the garden when she descried a tall female figure in white hastily turn into the maze. Imagining it to be Beatrice, she followed, and on arriving at the arbour in the centre, discovered the figure sitting on a bench, with its head bent down in a pensive attitude. Believing still the form to be that of my cousin, she called her by name, upon which the figure raised its head, disclosing the features of the deceased Inez. My Bill endeavoured to induce Aunt Ethel to sit

down in the exact spot the figure occupied, so as to convince her Reason that no material substance was there, and thus bring it to combat the phantasy of her Imagination. This course, he said, was recommended by physicians in these cases; and it was often found that when the Reason was thus assured that nothing could be there, Fancy was no longer able to cheat the senses, and the illusion vanished. Aunt Ethel, however, protested that she had not courage to make the experiment, and while they were arguing the matter, the apparition glided past and disappeared in one of the turnings of the maze."

Diana terrified by her own ghost story, had crept close to Plantagenet, and his lordship to re-assure her had placed his arm round her waist, when the *tété-à-tété* was broken in upon by mamma, who entered hurriedly, pale as death, and informed them that the last day was come, and that the earth was being consumed by fire. They followed her to the front of the house, and there an extraordinary and magnificent

spectacle presented itself: the whole vast arch of Heaven seemed indeed on fire. The glow was like the reflection of some mighty conflagration, such a light as is produced when the cover of a furnace is removed, and it is not surprising that many superstitious people believed that the Heavens were reflecting the flames of a place which must not be mentioned. Beatrice said that the phenomenon commenced at nine o'clock by a lurid glare appearing upon the horizon in the direction of Dieppe, which they at first supposed to proceed from some vessel upon fire, but in less than an hour it had increased to its present dimensions.

It was about the time that the lurid glow had reached its maximum, and the fears of the spectators were at the highest, that a most singular and alarming discovery was made: Diana was found to have become suddenly endowed with the property of giving out a brilliant electric spark to every one who touched her. The consternation of the poor girl, and indeed of all the company, does not admit of description; for

the passage of the electric fluid was accompanied by a powerful shock, felt both by herself and those with whom she came in contact.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RETURN OF THE WANDERER.—SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION.—POWER OF VOLUNTARILY INDUCING DEATH-TRANCE.—BEATRICE MEETS HER DOUBLE.—ZOANTROPHY.—DIANA IS VISITED AT MIDNIGHT BY HER EVIL GENIUS.

MRS. HARCOURT had taken for a year an old castle, situated about nine miles from Boulogne, upon the sea coast.

Upon the night of the remarkable Aurora Borealis, described in the last chapter, the old lady was watching the splendid phenomena from the terrace, when an exclamation from Sabra caused her to look up, and there, upon the battlement, standing out in relief against the fiery sky, she beheld the form of her long lost son. It is not surprising, under the circumstances, that at first all supposed the figure to be nothing more than a phantom ; and not until he had been clasped in

their arms, and had given, in addition, hearty osculatory testimony, would they admit him to be a thing of flesh and blood like themselves. He was very uncommunicative about himself, merely stating that he had been in England from some time, but prevented from visiting his friends, or informing them of his arrival, by the sudden and unexpected recurrence of that awful persecution which had before driven him to leave the country. He seemed much struck by the account of the apparition which responded to Abernethy's invocation, and pressed for details.

"The hair was loose," said Sabra, "in rich profusion sweeping the ground. The face was deadly pale, and the eyes, red as if with weeping. The apparition closed the door, and with a gliding motion, noiselessly moved forward to a position in front of Cousin Bill" [Annesly], "whom it seemed to regard with a deep melancholy. Here it remained for a few seconds, and then retired by the opposite door in the same ghostly manner. It was not until it was in the act

of disappearing that the doctor recovered sufficiently from his astonishment, which had quite deprived him of his presence of mind, to make the experiment suggested by Sir David Brewster. His rapture was great upon finding that the phantom appeared to him double, thus proving conclusively that his own views on the subject of Spectral Illusion were right, and those of the eminent philosopher wrong. Upon inquiry, he learned that the only persons present who not see the apparition were Diana, who had hidden her face in her hands the moment the doctor commenced his incantation, and Annesly himself, who complained bitterly that Doctor Abernethy had not given him a strong enough dose of the phantasmatic resin, although knowing that the nervous-system he was dealing with was of the soundest description, and the mind unusually well balanced. Cousin Bill went on to say that nothing more horrible could be conceived than to see the company all staring at vacancy, with their eyes starting out of their sockets.

“Upon comparing notes, it was found, that the apparition had appeared in nearly the same form to those who had never seen Inez in life as to those who were familiar with her; the height, figure, features, all accorded with that of the deceased. This seemed strange, almost unaccountable at first, but by a close cross-examination Doctor Abernethy got the seers to admit [reluctantly, for they were unwilling that the matter should be removed out of the domain of the supernatural, or deprived in any way of its interesting mystery,] that each one was familiar by description with the person of the deceased. Doctor Abernethy proceeded to analyse the countenance and actions of the phantom, showing that they were the necessary result of the train of ideas set in motion in the minds of the seers, and that, therefore, there was nothing very marvellous in every person simultaneously seeing the phantom exhibit the same phenomena of emotion and movement. Their minds were running in the same groove, and their exclamations of wonder tended to keep the men-

tal chariots abreast. Again, their surprise would keep them from being clear about the details of the scene, and thus when one person said he saw so and so, the imaginations of the others would tend to deceive them into believing that they also saw the same thing ; the memory being as completely under the dominion of Expectant Attention as the senses, and the various functions of the sensorium and cerebrum.

“ But the strangest part of the affair is that the same phantom has been seen twice since, once by Aunt Ethel, and once by the doctor himself. The doctor had some little law business to transact with cousin Bill, and as he was going up the stairs to the third floor flat upon which my worthy relative has his elevated chambers in Mediæval square, Lincoln-inn Fields, he observed the figure of a woman in white crouching in a dark recess, or corner, on the top landing, as if anxious to escape observation. Cousin Bill having the reputation of being a man of gallantry, and the doctor having the organ of curiosity strongly developed, and the natural love of

the old for scandal, was tempted to endeavour to discover who was the barrister's innamorata. He stopped and peered into the shrinking face. So deep was the shadow in the recess, that not until his own face was almost touching that of the Incognito did he recognise the features to be those of poor Inez. In the extremity of his surprise he started back, and missing his footing was precipitated to the foot of the flight of stairs, from which he was picked up by Annesly, who ran out upon hearing the noise, much shaken, but not otherwise injured.

"The phantom is now frequently seen at Beauclerc Villa, and it is observed that where it appears without cousin Bill, he invariably turned up within an hour. This strange coincidence puzzles the doctor excessively; he admits that he cannot explain it upon natural principles, for in many cases cousin Bill's advent was not expected, and therefore the spectre could not have been suggested to the mind of the seer by the association of ideas."

Harcourt only remained with his mother

a few days before again proceeding abroad in search of peace of mind. He visited many parts of the continent, but failing to shake off his tormentor, returned home. Gradually he became so accustomed to the object which pursued him, that it ceased to produce distress of mind, and eventually he quite recovered his spirits, and proposed to and was accepted by his cousin Beatrice Howard. The engagement had not been made public three weeks, when the persecution assumed a new and terrible shape, and the unfortunate man was seen by his friends to be gradually sinking into the grave.

After the return of Harcourt the phantom of Inez was occasionally seen at Beauclerc Villa accompanied by another spectre, which Abernethy recognised as the similitude of the deceased Bianca. The worthy doctor made several interesting scientific experiments upon these apparitions. He found that he could not bring them before the eye of his imagination by willing them to appear, nor could he dismiss them once they were

there. If he shut his eyes they vanished. When spoken to, sometimes they answered and their voices were quite like those of real persons, only more musical. He could smell them ; that is to say, he could distinguish upon them the perfumes which in life the originals were in the habit of using. They were apparent to the touch. Their behaviour was quite like that of real persons ; for instance, when, for experiment, he thrust a needle into one, it screamed and did not appear to him again for many days, nor ever after would come within arm's length. This, observed the doctor, was a very interesting and instructive experiment, proving the influence of Expectant Attention, that in all those cases where the malady of phantom-seeing is not accompanied by any disorder of the reasoning faculties, the spectres will seem to the patient to say and do exactly that which his reason suggests a real person would do under the circumstances.

When Hautville asked him if he were quite certain that Bianca and Inez were both

really dead, the doctor replied that he was, and proceeded to give his reasons. He had seen Bianca buried. Now this, he admitted, did not prove that she was dead, for recent investigations into the nature of the Vampire Epidemic, and the trance-inducing performances of the Fakeers of India, prove that the human body may fall, or be thrown, into a state resembling death, in which it will lie uninjured in the grave for weeks, or months, in fact, until means are taken to produce resuscitation. Therefore, Bianca might have been alive when she was buried, for she was huddled into the grave before decomposition had set in, during the panic which the cholera produced in the village of Gareloch-head. But he had also seen her body *exhumed* some time after the interment, the Methusaleh Insurance Company having got a Secretary of State's warrant for the purpose. The remains were found *charred almost to a cinder*. It was supposed by some that the body while in the ground had been struck by lightning, others attributed the appearance to the post-mortem generation of

phlogistic cases. "I was of the former opinion myself," continued the doctor, "until poor Inez confided to me the fact that the malady of spontaneous combustion was hereditary in the Mendoza family, that several of their common ancestors had perished in this way, and that in every case the disorder had followed an attack of death trance. Shortly after poor Inez herself fell a victim to the hereditary complaint, in the following melancholy manner. She had informed her husband that she possessed the power (like Colonel Townsend, Hermotinus of Clazomene, Restitutus, the priest Cælius Rhodoginus, certain of the Fakeers of India, and many others) of throwing her body into a condition so nearly resembling death that the most skilful physician could not discriminate it from the true or absolute state of extinct animation. Annesly expressed a wish to witness this extraordinary phenomenon, when, as if in compliance with his request, she grew pale, the blood forsook her lips, her breathing ceased, her heart grew silent, and she fell forward into his

arms apparently a corpse. For some time he endeavoured to restore animation, but finding his efforts unavailing, he laid her upon the sofa, and went in search of a doctor. Upon his return with a physician, the unfortunate husband found in the place of his wife only a blackened skeleton, and a heap of ashes.

“With regard to the late appearance of phantoms in the shape of these poor girls, there is nothing very singular in that. Sensorial illusions are unfortunately more common than is generally supposed, persons visited by them often concealing their infirmity, even from their medical advisers, fearing to be thought insane. Besides, phantom-seeing is a malady morally infectious in a very high degree. When this disorder touches a friend, or any person we know, it seldom fails to make a deep impression on us. We cannot help pondering on the malady, perhaps asking if we ourselves are likely to be victims to it at any time, and so a mental impression is produced which predisposes to the disorder. We may forget

that impression in time, but it is there nevertheless, the mischief is done and we have become constitutionally predisposed to the disorder."

"I cannot understand," said Hautville, "how the mind can possibly divide itself as it were into two parts, one part acting for the phantom and the other for the seer, so that the imagination of the seer converses with him as a separate individual; this new-born individual often totally differing from the seer in characteristic ideas, modes of expression, and intellectual capacity?"

"Is it more strange than that which takes place nightly in our dreams? In these Imagination will personate several individuals at once, and converse for each in appropriate and characteristic terms. In these, riddles thought over in vain during the day will often be solved, and light thrown upon mysterious circumstances which have baffled our waking penetration. Thus Condorcet saw in his dreams the final steps of a difficult calculation which had puzzled him during the day; and Condillac tells us, that

when engaged in his 'Cours d' Etude,' he frequently developed and finished a subject in his dreams which he had broken off before retiring to rest. Coleridge relates of himself that his fragment 'Kubla Khan' was composed during sleep, which had come upon him whilst reading the passage in 'Purchas's Pilgrimage,' on which the poetical description was founded, and was written down immediately on awaking, the images rising up before him as things, with parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. Similarly in the state, or disorder, of waking dreaming, or spectre seeing, the reasoning powers are occasionally exerted with unusual vigour and success, the conversation of the phantoms often exhibiting an eloquence, a genius, a knowledge of human nature, a power of calculation and combination, and thereby penetrating the secrets of the past, the present, and the future, far above the normal mental calibre of the seer. History affords us many examples of this."

The morning succeeding that on which

the foregoing conversation took place, Beatrice came down to breakfast looking very pale and agitated. She stated that she was aroused in the night by a sense of suffocation, of a weight upon her chest, and a feeling as if something cold and clammy were pressed upon her face. Feeling very drowsy, she dropped off to sleep again. In the morning she found a quantity of white powder about her eyes and the roots of her hair, and her whole face felt very stiff and sore. Three days after the occurrence of this strange event, she met in the dusk of the evening, in the dark laurel walk, near the great cedar, a tall woman closely veiled, who stopped and confronted her. She had resolved to accost the apparition the next time she should meet it, and now in a firm voice demanded its business. The figure slowly raised its veil and Beatrice found herself gazing at—HERSELF.

On the following day at the same hour, Hautville thought he saw Beatrice in the laurel walk; the face was turned towards him, the features being distinctly visible.

As he approached, she retreated at a quick pace, and turned into a side walk leading to an extensive open grassy area, in the centre of which was a thick detached clump of laurestina. Just as it was on the point of emerging from the cover of the trees, the figure turned its face towards its pursuer, revealing not the features of his cousin which he had seen it wear a moment before, but those of the phantom Inez. The countenance was menacing, and the spectre waved him back with a threatening gesture. It then entered the detached clump of laurestina. Hautville followed, and found that the figure which he had seen a moment before had disappeared, and in its place was a huge and hideous gorilla. The animal roared, beat its breast like a drum, and assumed such a terrible aspect that the young man lost his presence of mind, and retreated without making those scientific experiments which he had promised Abernethy to execute should such an opportunity as the present offer itself. So much shaken were his nerves by this prodigious apparition,

that he lost not a moment in relating what had occurred to the doctor, who said it was a case of Zoanthropy, gave him some little tonics, and ordered change of air and scene.

It was about this time that the public mind became agitated by a letter which appeared in one of the daily journals, expressing an opinion that Europe was on the eve of one of those great phantom-seeing epidemics which spread terror over the continent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, leaving their path strewn with insanity and death. It called attention to several cases of Zoanthropy, or Lycanthropy, Vampirism, and various other forms of sensorial illusion which were daily coming under the notice of the medical profession, and which it was to be feared were the precursors of an extensive and general outbreak.

This vaticination proved to be only too correct, before the prophetic utterance was a month old, people were dying in great numbers, frightened out of their lives by prodigious apparitions. The delusions it

produced were various. Some patients were visited by a phantom in the shape of a deceased friend, which predicted their death for a certain day, hour, and minute. All these cases proved fatal. Others imagined the corpse of some one whom they knew, lately dead, came in the night, and sucked their blood. All these cases, likewise, terminated fatally. Others were haunted by their own doubles, and others by phantoms in the shape of corpses, coffins, skeletons, and other ghastly objects. Others beheld phantoms which were constantly changing shape, one moment appearing as a human being, and the next metamorphosed into some animal; usually one of large size and great ferocity.

One circumstance attracted much attention, the doctors being quite unable to account for it ; in many cases the disease was ushered in by this remarkable symptom—the appearance of a white powder upon the face of the person about to be attacked by a particular form of spectral illusion. Persons would retire to bed in perfect health, and in the morning they would rise with their faces

sore, and stiff, and marked here and there, especially in the crevices of the eyes, and at the roots of the hair, with a white powder, which on being analysed was found to consist of sulphate of lime. *In every case where this occurred the patient saw his own double within three days.* It was not the secretion of sulphate of lime by some morbid action of the body which surprised the physicians, it was that this particular form of spectral illusion should follow the evolution of the mineral by the organism. Why should those patients who had not the sulphate of lime symptom see other people's doubles, but *never their own*; and those who had it never fail to see their own similitudes. Doctor Abernethy suggested that the sulphate of lime symptom was now so well known to be followed by the apparition of the double-self, that a patient upon perceiving it, Expected the visit of the doppleganger, and Faith, in accordance with the laws which rule our being, realized the expectation; for it is ever found that where sensorial illusions are epidemic they always

take the form of superstition, which is agitating the public mind at the time.

Diana being of a very nervous, imaginative, and impressible temperament, Doctor Abernethy gave strict orders that she should not be told about the extraordinary epidemic which was raging about her; but, notwithstanding all his care, she met, upon several occasions, the similitude, or double, of Beatrice, but without suspecting the true nature of the appearance; for subsequently it was studiously concealed from her that Beatrice was at the time in another situation. However, as the apparition always fled from her, would not answer when spoken to, and presented itself at times when the true Beatrice was thought to be stopping with Lady Lancaster York, in Mayfair, Diana was much mystified. Upon one occasion she awoke in the night to find a tall white female figure dressed as a bride, with veil and orange blossoms, bending over her, and fancying it to be her cousin, addressed it, upon which the phantom replied "I am thy evil genius; thou shalt see me again at the church of

Saint Incense." Much alarmed she called for assistance, and Doctor Abernethy was sent for. The acute physician, seeing from her excited state that if he acknowledged the figure seen to be a spectre arising from a disordered cerebrum, the most lamentable consequences might ensue from fright, persuaded the patient that what she had seen was nothing more than a vivid dream, and that she was asleep at the time it appeared to her.

CHAPTER V.

ONLY A PIMPLE.—THE DIE IS CAST.—BEAUTIFUL FOREVER.—TRANSFUSION OF BLOOD.

THE Royal Amalgamated Cosmopolitan Credit Financial Company, of which Lord Plantagenet had unfortunately been induced to become chairman, and to invest in largely, was in a critical state. The chairman was obliged to spend the business hours of every day in the city, and the ruin which threatened seemed to make him more averse than ever to matrimony. Formerly, when Diana grew too tender, and Mamma too suggestive, he would exclaim, "Ah, if I only were twenty years younger, no man should have Diana Beauclerc but myself;" but now his cry was, "Ah, if I only were twenty years younger, and the Royal Amalgamated Cosmopolitan Credit Financial Company were flourishing, nobody should," *et cetera*. Di had hoped, while there existed only one

reason, why she should not be made Lady Plantagenet ; but now that a second, and more formidable, started into life, she began to despair, became depressed in spirits, and seldom stirred out of the house. The mind ill at ease, and the want of exercise soon told upon her complexion and her figure ; the former lost its clearness, and the latter showed a most alarming disposition to get stout. Still she strove to conceal these facts from herself, and laid the blame on her mirror and on her dressmaker. It was the fear of growing stout and red that disturbed her most, being constantly reminded of the danger by the complexion of Mamma who had become red all over, and the proportions of Aunt Maud, whose once charming *embonpoint* had developed into obesity. Hautville, too, loathsome creature, was always trying to frighten her by condoling with her on the gradual expansion of her charms, and teasing her by calling public attention to the symptoms, telling everybody that the hooks were flying off every second in the most alarming manner, "no longer a dropping shot," he said, "but

a sustained and furious fusilade," that the lady's maid had given up her place, protesting that "my fingers are worn to the bone, and simply human digits could not keep Miss Di in hooks and eyes," and circulating many other equally ridiculous and false reports. Other circumstances too annoyed her ; since the night of the Aurora Borealis she had continued giving off electric sparks upon being touched, and from the pain which accompanied the evolution of the fiery fluid her condition was a source of great discomfort to herself and others. Again she was subject to nervous headaches, and after each attack upon awaking in the morning she would discover that some patches of her hair were white as if powdered with starch. The change was effected in a night, and in a few days the hairs gradually regained their golden tint. Again a recent event had revealed to the world that Aunt Maud was subject to attacks of insanity. The poor lady was constantly imagining herself to be somebody else, generally selecting her characters from history, or mythology. These

- hallucinations came on so suddenly that it was impossible to conceal the sad state of her mind from the habitues of the villa without keeping her constantly confined, a thing which Aunt Ethel would not permit. One moment Aunt Maud would be in perfect possession of her reason, and behaving quite rationally, and the next a change in her deportment and language would indicate that the lucid interval was past, and that she fancied herself to be Semiramis, or Boadicea, or Venus, or Iphigenia, or Andromeda, or Hebe, or some other celebrated historical or mythological personage. It was then necessary to humour her, for the most violent fits of rage were produced when any person by word or deed intimated a belief that she was still Aunt Maud, or failed when appealed to recognise her new individuality, and identify her as such a goddess, queen, or nymph. Upon these occasions she would insist upon being dressed in appropriate costume, and to quiet her she was permitted to arrange her drapery in any way she pleased, and the arrangement was often too classical

to be altogether decent. This frequently led to the most embarrassing situations ; on one occasion poor Di, while promenading on the King's walk with Lord Plantagenet, being accosted by her aged relative, (who had escaped from surveillance by jumping out of the window) in the classical costume of Andromeda strictly copied from the marble statuette on the drawing-room table.

Now a mad aunt, Diana well knew, must be injurious to the matrimonial prospects of even the most fascinating of nieces, and when to this drawback is added an abnormal disposition to generate electricity, that niece if she wishes to get a husband ought not to be too particular. Few men would care to have a wife who would constantly be discharging sparks into them, and whom they could never touch without receiving a violent shock. On a review of all these circumstances, Di began to believe that unless she married Annesly, she would be left upon the shelf, and urged by this consideration commenced to reply with more regularity to her *fiancé's* letters, and ceased to leave them kicking

about the house. Still she hesitated to sacrifice her long cherished hopes. For many years she had been styled by her friends "Lady Plantagenet," jokingly, of course, and though at first she had laughingly repudiated the brevet, yet she secretly felt flattered by the title, and in time began to regard it almost as a matter of right. Beautiful, as she undoubtedly was, no *parti* had ever proposed except Annesly : she dreaded being left on the shelf, and yet could not make up her mind to make the long enduring suitor happy. How could she who was the beloved of a viscount, who was only prevented from making her his wife by an unfortunate disparity in years, having assured her over and over again that he would do so if he were twenty years younger—how could she so far derogate from that proud position as to marry a conveyancer ! Is it surprising that she hesitated ? Is it surprising that the contemplation of such a desperate act of social suicide undermined her spirits and shook her constitution ? A mansion in Piccadilly she had once thought

her matrimonial chariot would draw up at, and now some malignant influence had transformed the glorious prospect into a hackney cab and a "bandbox" at Kew. Such was the state of affairs upon the morning of that eventful day upon which the Die was cast.

It was about half an hour after Mary had brought in the hot water and opened the shutters, after Di had given her three preliminary yawns, counted one hundred, and turned down the blanket, and just as she was taking up her stockings, which it was her indolent custom to put on in bed, that she discovered a something which produced extreme agitation. With pardonable vanity she had turned towards the glass to survey her charms, and there IT was. She concentrated her gaze, she rubbed her eyes, and looked again—the appalling object had not disappeared. What was it that thus created so much alarm? Nothing but a small round red spot upon her left cheek. It stood alone, but she had reason to fear that it might be the advanced guard of a large

army. She rubbed, and rubbed, and rubbed, but could not rub the unwelcome intruder away. On the contrary, the more she rubbed, the redder, the fiercer, the angrier grew the aspect of the terrible, the ruthless invader. Never was her toilette so hastily made, and yet never did it take so long to accomplish, for after each article of clothing was huddled on she hastened to the glass to have another look at that which distracted her. The gong announced breakfast. Then Di carefully covered the red spot with tooth powder and, hoping that it might escape detection, responded to the summons.

Scarcely had she entered the parlour when Aunt Ethel—the only person down—discovered the enemy lying in ambush under the dentifrice, and throwing up her hands in dismay, asked if her eyes deceived her. Diana replied that it was “only a pimple.” Aunt Ethel seemed angry at the light manner in which the girl treated the matter, and said that young ladies with pimples found it hard to get husbands. At this moment Mamma entered the room, she

started, and Diana anticipated her questions by repeating "only a pimple."

"*Only* a pimple," repeated Mrs. Beauclerc, with sarcastic emphasis—"only a volcano—only utter annihilation of your prospects! Di, you ought not to keep your cousin William shilli-shalli any longer. Do you think now that the attornies are beginning to know him, that he will marry you if the volcano breaks out into a general eruption? You have no money—you have nothing but your beauty, and if you lose *that*, I'd like to know who'd have you?"

Di was relieved from the necessity of replying to this embarrassing question by the entrance of Aunt Maud, who at once exclaimed: "Bless me, child, what is that upon your cheek?"

"Only a pimple," returned Di, while the tears stood in her eyes.

"There are more where that came from," said Aunt Maud, nodding her head sagaciously: "get married before they come out, and then you need not care how numerous they are. My advice is that you make your

cousin William happy without delay—make him happy at once—do dear, before they commence cropping up like crocuses in Spring. Do, dear, before your face comes regularly into blossom.” •

Mrs. Mowbray, who was spending the “circuit” at Beauclerc Villa, discovered the fiery phenomenon just at the moment she was conveying the second cup of tea to her pretty lips. The cup remained suspended, like Mahomed’s tomb, between Earth and Heaven, and she telegraphed her sympathy and dismay across the table; raised her eyebrows to express her surprise; compressed her lips, to intimate that she was fully conscious of the gravity of the symptom; frowned, to convey that she would observe secrecy and silence; and then, with a deep sigh, buried her head in her teacup.

Breakfast over, and prayers said, Mrs. Mowbray led Di away into the most retired part of the garden, and after looking round to make certain that nobody was listening said, in a thrilling whisper, “a carbuncle!”

“Only a pimple,” rejoined Di, bursting

into tears, "it is too bad to make such a fuss about a pimple—only a pimple—as if everybody had not a pimple sometimes—a little red spot not the size of the head of a pin."

"Well, dear, I was only going to say that as your poor cousin William has waited"—

"This is the fourth time I have been teased about Bill this morning—I won't listen to anything more about him—I know he has waited, and he may wait longer."

"I thought you wanted to get away from here?"

"I do, I do—I hate this place, We never entertain now, and are quite out of society, and I am thus deprived of those opportunities, without which no girl can settle herself. My youth has passed away, while other girls, not half as much run after, have made good matches. Month after month, year after year, I have passed here the same hopeless, weary, weary, monotonous existence, and what little amusement I have had, has been furnished by the kindness of Lord Plantagenet. Now he is gone, and the place seems deserted, I am tired of it, I am

tired of myself—I am tired of every thing.” She leant her head against a tree and sobbed bitterly. “If they had only given me the opportunity! I went out one season, and was persecuted with attentions. And yet, my youth has passed away, my beauty is waning, and I am still—Diana Beauclerc.” She paused for some minutes, and then continued. “I suppose I must marry Bill: I feel that I am in the way here. Aunt Ethel may marry, she hinted as much the other day. Besides, she is not as well off as she was. She has had to borrow money and is in debt every where. I know she has borrowed a large sum from Hal Hautville, and that is the reason he is allowed to stop here, and tease me, and injure my prospects, by circulating ridiculous stories about me. I know, Aunt Ethel thinks me an incumbrance; though, she don’t say so, but I feel it, and it makes me unhappy.”

“You would be much happier with Bill than you are here. Kew is within half an hour’s rail of London; all the gaities of the town would be open to you. Bill is a rising

man—the attornies are beginning to know him. And such a good-natured fellow too—he gave me this shawl brooch, which he bought for me at his own jeweller's—it cost ever so much, he told me how much, but I forget. Every body likes him—my Tom is in love with him, ever since the dinner Bill gave him at the London dining rooms, at the corner of Chancery lane, kept by Sawyer, you know, who is purveyor to the Queen. Why, some day you may be wife of a Lord Chancellor—think of that. Bill says he has a presentiment he'll be Lord Chancellor some day. As for Plantagenet, he is irretrievably ruined, through that Financial Company; he would not marry when he could; he could not marry now, if he would. Remember, too, that when a barrister is made Lord Chancellor he is always elevated to the peerage, so that in marrying Bill you are uniting yourself to a prospective Peer, and will, in course of time—I look on it as a certainty—be Lady Annesly; think of that, Lady Annesly. I hope your Ladyship will get my Tom a Commissionership of Bank-

ruptcy, or a Recordership, or some other trifle, when you are elevated to your half—the better half—of the woolsack?”

“But, I don’t love Bill—at least not with that kind of devoted love which a woman should feel for her husband—not as I *could* love.”

“So much the better: the romantic anti-nuptial love never survives the honeymoon; and as you have never felt it, its ghost cannot reproach the calmer but more enduring affection which will spring from your union.”

“I did not say I had never felt that devoted love,” returned Di, in a half whisper, and getting very pale.

“You like another man better? But no matter! I did not care for my Tom when I married him, I liked another man better. I consented, to get away from a home where I was miserable, and even would have retreated at the last moment if Mamma had let me. For several months, I quarreled with Tom every day, and tried in vain to make him quarrel with me, and at last I ended by loving him. I do not think a woman

can help loving her husband, if he loves her, and is uniformly kind and attentive."

"I wonder I have had so few proposals? It is strange, considering how much I was admired and sought."

"Perhaps you don't give your admirers enough encouragement?" Mrs. Mowbray, as she made this suggestion, could not repress a smile.

"No, it is not that," returned Di, shaking her head: "I think it must be that the men are deterred by the state of Aunt Maud's health, or repelled by my curious electric condition. I assure you two or three times my partners at balls seemed just on the point of proposing when an unfortunate spark spoiled all. They jumped, looked surprised and startled, their tender manner died away, being replaced by frigid politeness, and refusing to yield to the guidance of my arm, they led me back to my chaperon."

Di was still bemoaning her unfortunate condition when the door opened and:

"This is from William Ardfort Annesly,"

said Aunt Ethel, holding a letter towards her niece.

Di knew that something dreadful must have happened, for her aunt's back seemed stiffening, and her hair bristling with indignation.

" Well, Aunty?"

" He accuses me of playing fast and loose with him, of sanctioning his suit and encouraging Lord Plantagenet at the same time."

" He accuses you of that, Aunty—Oh, what a shame!"

" Yes, he has written me a most insulting letter. He has been pleased—volunteered to give an opinion of my conduct without a fee. If all his clients"—Aunt Ethel paused, she remembered that circumstances had rendered it advisable that her niece should become Annesly's wife in time to prevent the withering sarcasm which she had been about to hurl from passing her lips.

" Go on, Aunty?"

" Perhaps I have not made sufficient allowance for the peculiar circumstances of the case: his are the ravings of a jealous

man—of a man beside himself with passion ; and as such deserving rather of pity than anger. He is undoubtedly very much attached to you, and, I repeat, his intemperate language may be due rather to love than to ill-temper, humph. He is rising in his profession, the attornies are beginning to know him. You are now twenty-five. How do you wish me to answer this letter” (shaking it) “demanding that your engagement shall either be fulfilled at once or broken off ? Remember that in deciding the question you are probably determining whether you are to fulfil woman’s holy mission, or whether you are to remain for the rest of your life a spinster. In my opinion, for several reasons which I will not specify, you have arrived at that part of the journey of life where the paths which lead to matrimony and perpetual celibacy diverge. Which will you choose ? I have chosen the latter, and I will confess to you, what I have never confessed to mortal before, I regret it. No woman can be happy without a husband and a family. She must have something to love, and some-

thing to cherish: something to draw forth her feminine sympathies, or they will dry up within her as mine have done, or run riot in eccentricities as have done those of poor Aunt Maud; an old maid is a violation of one of Nature's laws, and Nature never fails to punish such violation.”

“But I am not twenty-five yet, Aunt, and I am not in a hurry to get married. Of course I do not mean to be an old maid—only to wait a little longer.”

“Your engagement to William Annesly has already lasted two years, Diana. The matter must be settled either one way or the other; there is no escape; I never received such an insulting letter in my life as this” (tapping it fiercely)—“never—he must have been mad when he wrote it—his gratuitous opinion—but no matter. Will you have him—will you allow a time to be settled for the affair to take place, or would you prefer that it be broken off?”

Now Di did not want to choose. She wished that matters should remain as they were. An engagement was one thing, she

observed to herself, marriage was another. Things were going on very well—why would Bill not let well alone. Why was he in such a hurry. She felt angry with Bill. Why would Aunt Ethel insist on pushing matters on merely because she had got a tiresome letter. She liked being engaged, she liked to visit occasionally the villa near Kew which had been taken and furnished for her, to poke the stuffing of the chairs with her parasol, shift the furniture from room to room, and direct and superintend improvements and alterations in the garden. And now that she had got every thing nice, it was too bad to be told that she must either give up the villa or enter upon possession at once. Try and imagine, dear reader, what your own feelings would be if a person offered you share of a mausoleum and then, after you had spared neither time nor trouble in making it snug and picturesque, coolly told you that the gift would be revoked unless you consented to be carried home to it at once, and you will have, perhaps, some faint conception of Di's indignation at Annesly's unreasonable request. She did not

want to enter the matrimonial tomb at Kew just yet. She might never want to enter it: the millenium might come unexpectedly, Plantagenet might propose, or *The Man* might yet turn up. Besides, age had not yet deprived her of everything which renders maidenhood desirable : her charms had not yet all flown, her lovers not yet all deserted, her spirits not yet all vanished—why should Diana Beauclerc commit social suicide to qualify herself to be interred at Kew—when her hopes were quite dead, then, and not till then, would she consent to their being buried.

“Choose ?” repeated Aunt Ethel.

“I will do anything you wish, Aunty,” returned Di, wearily. This was equivalent to saying that she would not do anything at all, for she knew well what the reply would be. “Which ever you like, Aunty.”

“Which ever I like, Diana ! God bless me, child, is it I that am going to marry the man ? My only wish is for your happiness ; the decision rests with you.” Diana was

equally determined that it should not rest on herself, and that she would neither consent to give up her engagement nor to be prematurely immured in the mausoleum, unless forced to do so. She thought that if Bill were asked down matters might be restored to their former footing, "when I have him beside me," she said to herself, "I can wind him round my finger, I can coax him to leave matters where they are."

Aunt Ethel continued to press for an answer, and Di continued to remain mute. The more Aunt Ethel pressed the more determined did Di become to maintain an unbroken silence; she pressed her full red lips together until they grew white and the mouth appeared a mere line; a shadow fell upon her face—a look of inflexible, dogged obstinacy.

Although Aunt Ethel had thought it right to assume a virtuous indignation on receiving Annesly's letter, and although she felt angry at many of the taunts contained in it, yet she could not help being amused by its general tenor. The whole duty, or at least principal duty, of the Aunt of a marriageable Niece is

to give every facility to eligible admirers. Aunt Ethel had done no more than her duty, and her conscience acquitted her. She had told Annesly that she did not approve of long engagements, and when she had consented to that existing she had done so under protest, and expressly stipulated that if Di should subsequently change her mind the engagement should be null and void. Of course it would have been absurd to make such a stipulation and then not to give Di an opportunity of profiting by it. Every reasonable man must see this. Because, otherwise, what use would be the stipulation? But Annesly was not a reasonable man. To tax her with playing fast and loose when she was merely executing a sacred trust was really a laughable matter. Poor Aunt Ethel, she had hitherto looked upon the Annesly engagement as little more than a spur with which Di might gall the sides of Fitztickle's love whenever it jibbed or shyed on its way to the goal of matrimony, or as a dernier resort in case any accident should disqualify this aspiring little jockey for mounting such high horses again. Then the hack, which

had been kept in reserve, might be saddled and bridled and mounted, and though poor ambitious little jock would doubtless, at first, be thoroughly ashamed to be seen on such a sorry half-bred in the places where she had hitherto figured with noble animals with pedigrees a yard long, and secretly rage at being excluded from courses over which none but thoro'-breds are allowed to canter, still she would get accustomed to it in time, and even if not, any matrimonial horse—even a matrimonial donkey would be better than nothing. Aunt Ethel had clung to the last to the belief that Di would make a good match, but she could no longer close her eyes to the fact, that the flirtation with Plantagenet had seriously damaged her Niece's matrimonial prospects, and that the men though willing to flirt were no longer willing to marry: no man likes to take that which another has unequivocally rejected. Most marrying men pass by as ineligible a maid of twenty-five, naturally concluding that the flower would not have been left so long on the stem had it been worth gathering. Aunt Ethel had pondered over

all these circumstances and calculated Di's chances from the data they afforded. She had indirectly asked Plantagenet his intentions, and he had indirectly said he had none, that he was too poor and too old to marry. Her eye had anxiously scanned the matrimonial horizon, but the only sail visible was the forensic one. But though Aunt Ethel had formed an opinion as to what her Niece's conduct in the present crisis should be, yet she would not take upon herself the responsibility of forcing the girl to carry it out.

"I cannot understand," said Aunt Ethel to Mrs. Mowbray, "how any woman can experience a difficulty in making up her mind when she receives the offer of a husband. But Di *won't* make up her mind. She commenced by telling me that I might send back any answer I liked to this letter—a most insulting letter from William Ardfort Annesly, accusing me of playing fast and loose with him, and demanding if I mean the engagement to be carried out, and if not, what do I mean—what do I mean?—He wants to know what do I mean! He wants to know also do I take

him to be a fool. Now such a letter, you see, demands an immediate reply, and when I asked Di for one she told me to send back any answer I liked—just as if I were the person whose happiness is involved in the matter. This of course was a most unsatisfactory reply—one which I would not act on. I asked her again if she would like to be the wife of William Ardfort Annesly, and she made the absurd answer that she did not care. And when I put the matter in a different light, by asking if she would like *not* to be the wife of William Ardfort Annesly, she still said she did not care. Finally, when I pressed her on the subject, she refused to give any answer *at all*, and for the last half hour has maintained an obstinate silence, in spite of my remonstrances, my entreaties, and my prayers. All I want is to find out what her wishes really are. The attorneys are beginning to know Annesly, and doubtless there are splendid prizes open to the members of his profession. I have my own opinion on the advantage of this match, taking certain peculiar circumstances into consideration, but I will not

force the dear girl's inclination, she shall be the sole arbitress of her own destiny. Do go up and try to obtain an answer from her. She is in one of her obstinate humours, and will not, so much, as open her lips to me. But first—ha ! ha ! ha ! read these facetiæ," and with a satirical giggle she disburdened herself of Annesly's letter.

Now Di had also scanned the matrimonial horizon with the glass of experience, and was almost commencing to believe that the full rigged ship (metaphorically alluding to Plantagenet) which was continually tacking about her, now coming down with all sail set, as if bent on complying with her signal of distress, and taking her on board, and now, just as it is close aboard, and her hopes are at the highest, and she is telling everybody that there can be no mistaking its intentions this time, porting its helm and running clean out of sight—that this tantalising craft is an untrustworthy, a deceitful, and dangerous craft, of analogous character to the phantom ship or flying Dutchman which harrasses poor sailors and leads them on to

shipwreck. She had been at last obliged to get her dresses let out, and, though she had told Mrs. De Monde to keep the secret, the matter had, in some unaccountable way, oozed out. Again, the small round red spot alarmed her, and there was a faint yellow tinge in her complexion, and lines under her eyes for which she could no longer hold the defective light in her room and the imperfect silvering of the back of her glass accountable. She was a quarter of a century old, and that is a terrible age for a maid to arrive at. Still, Miss Diana Beauclerc hoped against hope—she could not make up her mind to be buried just yet—she thought it hard that she should be required to give up the celibate ghost in such a limited time—the notice was too short—the future alarmed her. If Aunt Ethel would say “you must fulfil your engagement,” why then—well she wasn’t quite sure what she would do in that case—on reflection, in that case, she thought she would say plumply, she would’nt. Still that would be an open fair way of dealing with her ; but to keep teasing her to say what her mind was when she had no mind

on the subject, except to leave matters where they were, was a species of tyranny which she would *not* submit to. Poor Di, no wonder she felt it hard to resign the last chance of realising the dreams of her youth, through which even a Royal Personage flitted, and descend into a conveyancer's wife, with a cottage in the purlieu of Kew. "Thank goodness," she said to herself, "if I marry Bill now and am unhappy, it will be Aunt Ethel's fault : I will never have to reproach myself with having shaped my own destiny badly, when *I* might have done better; if the Inevitable, in the form of Aunt Pen, shapes my destiny for me, why then *che sara sara*, and I must be resigned. And, thank goodness, if I make Bill unhappy, it will not be my fault either : he will have hurried me, he will have shaped his own destiny, and then, *che sara sara*, he must be resigned." Spectres of the past, shadows of the future, undefined hopes and fears quadrilled together confusedly in her brain, until she grew dizzy and sick and could only mutter, "*che sara sara*. But still I won't

commit myself—they shan't get a word out of me." And for a long time they did not—neither artifice nor coaxing could draw a word from the reticent *fiancée*, she remained sulkily obdurate, responding to Mrs. Mowbray's endearments neither by word nor deed. She did not indeed rebuke the loving arms thrown around the neck, but she steeled herself against them.

"If I were single or if I could get rid of my Tom in any way, I vow I would marry Bill myself," said the advocate's advocate.

"Well, mind, this is not an answer," said Di, after the interview had lasted some time, and the fair pleader was beginning to despair—"mind this is neither saying yes nor no—this is not committing myself in any way—ask him down—tell Aunt Ethel to ask him down—this is my ultimatum." She closed her lips and became again inexorable.

When Di had got rid of Mrs. Mowbray, she locked the door and made other elaborate preparations for writing a secret and important letter to Lord Plantagenet, telling him how she was pressed on all sides to fulfil the

engagement with her Bill at once, stating that she did not love him, although she liked and respected him, and believed that love would come after marriage ; and asking his lordship's advice. This letter, she thought, must bring this very procrastinating lover to the point if he really had any "intentions."

By return of Post, came the reply : if she consulted her own heart she could not go astray. This letter gave the death blow to the poor girl's hopes. Piqued, mortified, cruelly wounded, her mind no longer vacillated when she thought of Annesly, and she resolved, by making the faithful long suffering barrister happy to punish the deceitful and perfidious peer. "He will repent," she sobbed, "when he sees me married to another."

Being now completely off with the old love Di was very anxious to be on with the newer. She sent him off, per return of post, a very affectionate letter, reproaching him playfully for preferring the society of his client's to her's (Annesly in reply to Aunt Ethel's invitation

had stated that pressure of business would prevent him from running down at once). "My Bill," she wrote, "you have often told me all other things give place, even the Attorneys, when'er a lady is in the case, and yet you have not found a day for coming down! Can it be, hubby, that you prefer your client's society to mine? Can it be that the Attorney-General has in your eyes superior attractions? Oh, shame!"

Annesly repudiated the suggestion in a characteristic reply, and although his forensic road appeared to be paved with briefs, and intricate cases of title were, figuratively, running about his chambers with knives and forks stuck in their sides, crying: "who'll eat me," like the little pigs in the fairy tale, he arranged to steal a few holy-days.

He was not as happy as he expected to be at Beauclere Villa, for Banbury and Norton were continually "dropping in" and exciting his jealousy, and annoying him with rude "chaff." One of these worthies overheard him saying to Di: "I want you to

come down to us for the long vacation, love. I want you to see me at home. I want you to see me in a place where there are none of those miserable cads, like Hautville, and Banbury, and Norton, who make it a point to misrepresent every thing I say or do, in a futile and idiotic attempt to turn me into ridicule." This aspiration was a prolific source of ridicule, a jest which the miserable cads were never tired of reviving, and turning and twisting into every imaginable form, and they even led the wretched man to believe that poor Di had betrayed his confidence, and laughed at him behind his back. And occasionally Di did betray him into the hands of the Philistines, sometimes in a spirit of mischief, quickly repented of; and at others in a moment of gushing confidence. Every woman is subject at times to these moments of gushing trustfulness, during which her secrets percolate through her into any vessel that is near to receive them. When the impulse died, poor Di would wonder at her own indiscretion and lie awake all night reproaching herself, and

fiercely biting the mischievous tongue which had committed her.

Annesly thought it might raise Aunt Ethel's suspicions if a barrister, supposed to have a large practice were to take too many holydays at the busiest time of the year. In a few weeks the long vacation would commence, and Di having promised to spend it with his mother he would have her all to himself at Garelohead: moved by these considerations, he got a trusty friend in London to send him down two telegrams; one purporting to be from the Secretary of "The India and China Magnetic Telegraph Company," requiring his instant attendance at the Company's office; and the other from the Attorney-General, requesting an immediate consultation relative to an intricate case of title. Both reached him while the family circle were gathered round the breakfast table. Hautville thus describes the scene:

"Ha, bless my soul," exclaimed Annesly, starting up—"I must be off instantly to London, this telegram is from the Attorney-General, begging me to call on him *before*

eleven to-morrow, relative to an intricate case of title, in which we are jointly engaged; and this—this is even more important—it is from the ‘India and China Magnetic Telegraph Co.,’ requesting my instant attendance at the Company’s office about a—a—a something which you would not understand—there you can read the telegram yourself—you see it is peremptory in tone and—ha—in fact, admits of no delay. My fees in this case during the past month amounted to”—

“Say ten thousand guineas, Bill,” suggested the loathsome creature, “when you are telling a bouncer you may as well tell a good one.”

Annesly glanced for a moment contemptuously at his tormentor, and then left the room muttering “obtrusive cad.”

“Now,” said Di, addressing the beast, and holding up the telegrams in triumph, “you are always saying that my Bill has no practice, and yet you see he has’nt even time to eat his breakfast. The Attorney-General don’t seem to be able to get on without him; and

the Secretary of "The India and China Magnetic Telegraph Company writes, 'Consultation. Vital question. New articles of Association. Meeting Directors 12 noon. Require your instant attendance.'

Poor Di! Hardly had Annesly left Beauclerc Villa when the ghosts of her hopes arose and commenced to trouble her. She tried to exorcise them, but they refused to be layed: "Begone," she would say, "in the name of the Pimple, and of the Yellow Tinge in my Complexion, and of the six inches which my Circumference has increased within the last twelve months, and of the Many Years which have elapsed since I first commenced to look for a husband, and of the Injury which Plantagenet's attentions have done to my Prospects." But still the disembodied aspirations stalked about and tormented her. She became moody and ceased to be companionable. She would sit for hours in the bow window of the drawingroom with her face concealed by the curtains, and a book upon her knees; but her attitude was a suggestive lie, for she did not read. When her Aunts or

Mamma spoke to her she made no reply, and they thought that she was sulking ; but in truth, it was that she dare not speak, for the curtains concealed a pair of eyes in which the tears were brimming, and had she tried to answer she could have produced nothing but a sob. From the time of her “coming out” at the ball, given by the —shire Militia, ten years before, up to the day on which it was finally arranged that she should become Mrs. Annesly, eoniums, on her beauty had been incessantly dinned into her willing ears ; Mamma and Aunt Ethel never tiring of enumerating her conquests and predicting that she would certainly make a great match ; and the *cicisbei*, taking advantage of her vanity, constantly inflating her with compliment, a process which they termed “blowing a girl out.” Thus encouraged, poor Di erected a brilliant castle in the air, allying herself in imagination with every member of the peerage (one at a time of course) who had been civil to her during a dance or a supper, and in fancy reigning Queen of Hearts and of Fashion among the matrons of the West End. And

now, making what everybody affirmed to be a wretchedly bad match, she was the object of commiseration instead of envy, and so she hid her face behind the window curtains, sobbing silently, while pulling her Magnificent Etherial Castellated Structure to pieces. She became listless, seldom went out of doors, snubbed all her old admirers, and snapped at every one who spoke to her whenever she felt that she could venture to answer without bursting into tears. Sometimes, when a few people collected around Aunt Ethel's hospitable hearth, she would shake off her apathy, and enter into the amusements going with a kind of wild gaiety, but when the guests were gone she would go to her room with a white face and cry herself to sleep. On the whole she was glad that the matter was settled and the time fixed; for the frequent failure of her matrimonial expectations, sometimes just as they appeared upon the point of being realized, had rendered her nervous and superstitious, and she began to fear the degradation of being left on the celibate

shelf. This would be humiliation indeed ! The thought frightened her, causing her to religiously perform the promise of sending two long letters a-day to Mediæval-square, and (as she knew that she was watched and all her sayings and doings were reported in Lincoln's Inn Fields) to be very circumspect in her behaviour with other men.

Di was not heartless, as the beast asserted. Worldly she was, for all around her were worldly, it was the creed in which she had been brought up, and therefore she was more to be pitied than blamed for her belief. If she were artificial, it was because she was *not* heartless, but had feelings to hide. If her spirits were low at the non-realization of the dreams of her youth, was it not a proper pride which induced her to assume a gaiety which she had ceased to feel, and very ill-natured of the loathsome creature to criticize her smile and say that it was forced ? No, she was *not* heartless, she was affectionate and impulsive. But, she was fickle, incapable of any enduring attachment, always liking best the man she was with last. This,



however, she would not admit, except in jest, even to herself. She still, sometimes, in her credulous moments, believed that there was a man somewhere whom she could love devotedly (with *the* love) and live with contentedly on water and a crust. She had never seen him, but she thought that he must be somewhere.

While Diana, in Beauclerc villa, was being made uneasy by the fear that Annesly might throw her over, the forensic *fiance* in his third floor flat in Mediæval-square, Lincoln's Inn Fields, was being tortured by a similar fear—the fear that Di would throw him over. During the two or three days which he had spent at Beauclerc villa, after his reconciliation with Aunt Ethel, Di had been so demonstratively loving, and had looked so beautiful, that he believed everything she told him, but now that he was beyond the influence of the potent spells which had charmed away the scepticism, and replaced it by a blind credulity, the doubts and fears which had harassed him during the early part of his engagement returned. He tried to believe that the enchan-

tress was marrying because she loved him and that if in that wretched dreary space, stretching away to the objective point of the engagement, a more eligible Proposal was encountered, she would not be tempted to be false to him. Then her antecedents would recur to him and he would despond. One circumstance, however, cheered him : every time Di went to town she visited the Villa at Kew. She was proud of it, the furniture all having been selected by herself, and the grounds laid out on a plan of her own. It was she that designed the rockery ; the grotto and the hermit ; the fountain, presided over by a naiade ; the grove, guarded by a dryad ; the Venus and Cupid, dove-cot and turtle-doves, to suggest thoughts of love.

Mrs. Annesly's invitation arrived and was accepted, and Bill had the pleasure of escorting his mistress to the land of the Children of the Mist when the long vacation commenced. There are few persons who can help liking those who like them. There is, perhaps, no woman who can fail to feel some little tenderness for a man who loves her

dearly. And if the woman is separated from all society save that of the members of the family of the man who loves her dearly, the tenderness may be, for the time, fanned into a flame which she may persuade herself is *the* love, if she feels so disposed. For woman has naturally no opinions of her own : her likings and loves are little more than the reflection of the opinions of those about her ; hence, when she meets a man solely in the company of those who love and respect him, who are ever on the watch to illuminate his good points and shadow his defects, her mind takes the tone of those about her. So it was with Di. She saw that Annesly was looked upon as little less than a god in the Blue-stone Villa, that his mamma and sisters bowed down before him ; and she naturally began to worship too. Colton has said, "The fool of one house is the eagle of another." Di had often figuratively conferred on Annesly a suit of motley ; now she began to deck him with the plumage of the eagle. Even his face seemed to her altered ; the nose

she had often disdainfully alluded to as beak, now seemed to her a beautiful aquiline and the shoulders which she had sneeringly spoken of as being humped, no longer presented to her eye anything more than graceful curve which she was assured to the fond mother was characteristic of genius.

But the course of true love never did run smooth: the fictitious practice was in imminent danger, it threatened momentarily to collapse and bury the barrister's long cherished matrimonial hopes beneath the ruins. The clerk was clamouring for arrears of salary. His "own" jeweller—ungrateful man—threatened to put an execution into the Villa at Kew if the bill for certain bracelets, ring &c., was not paid forthwith. His "own" watchmaker, his "own" perfumer, and his "own" tailor were equally importunate. Nothing but their belief that Di was an heir prevented them from proceeding to extremities, and the wretched love-sick man feared that they might discover the cheat before the consummation of the nuptials, feared that

some of his rivals might warn them that Di had not a penny of her own. Of course they must discover the deception he had practised in a few weeks after the marriage, but for this he cared not. His whole soul was so absorbed in his passion that he had no future beyond the honeymoon. "Only give me the undisturbed possession of Di for one week," he said to a certain person, "and my creditors then may imprison or do what they like with me, I will have obtained all that in life is worth living for, and will be content to die." The reader will readily understand how a man in this fearful state of mind would not hesitate to commit any atrocity suggested by his morbid ideas, whereby he might gain the object of his wishes.

An early day was fixed for the wedding. The settlements were drawn. Aunt Ethel rejoiced in their comprehensiveness. She did not leave her son-in-law elect a chair, or a spoon, or indeed a shred of property of any kind, real or personal, in possession or reversion—except his wardrobe—which he could call his own, everything he had and every-

thing he expected was minutely catalogued and tied up.

Meantime the long vacation seemed short at Garelohead. Di had no one with whom she could compare her Bill: his deficiencies were no longer silently pointed out by the excellencies of other men; or noisily proclaimed by the jealous tongues of other lovers, and so she commenced to think that she might, perhaps, in time, be able to love her Bill with *the* love. Sometimes, while sitting on a boulder, in the lover's twilight of that wooded ravine, at the head of the Gareloch, or reclining on the heather fringing the shore of the beautiful and solitary bay on Loch Long which looks upon Carrick Castle, watching the ripple of the tide on the shingly beach, a delicious langour would steal over her and she would fancy—for the moment—that she actually *did* love her Bill with *the* love. Nor was the circumstance of Bill being her *fiancé* without its influence: it made it her duty to kiss and fondle him, and a woman cannot help loving a little that which she caresses. Perhaps Di would have

kissed and fondled her Bill at Garelohead even if it had not been her duty, for she was by nature affectionate and demonstrative, and accustomed to exhibit her feelings in that way, and Tiny had been left at home. When pleased, it was essential that she should have something to kiss, something on which she could bestow the overflowing of her heart; she would have been miserable else. Tiny was the usual safety-valve; now it was Bill. For a true woman kisses everybody and everything she loves, or likes: all her relations, all her female friends (and, some say, all her male too, when nobody is looking); all the lower animals of the genus pet—dogs, cats, parrots, and such like; also portraits, locks of hair, rings, letters, and other inanimate trifles which remind her of the absent: in a word, when anything pleases her, nature prompts her to testify her gratitude in this graceful and delightful manner. The scenery pleased Di, and Tiny not being present, and feminine instinct being imperative, Annesly was coaxed, and petted, and caressed until all his doubts of the re-

ality of her love were, for the time, dispelled.

Diana had not been long at Garelohead when a letter was received by Annesly marked *Immediate* in the four corners. As soon as the barrister received it, he jumped up from the breakfast table declaring that he must be off to London by the next train to attend a consultation with the Attorney-General, relative to an intricate case of title.

"The amount of business, my love," he said, "which has accumulated in my chambers during my absence, is positively incredible. Did I ever tell you what the Attorney-General said to me not very long ago: 'Bill, my boy,' he said, 'you are a young man, and yet the attorneys know you!—how is it that at your age the attorneys know you? There is Smith on the first floor, double your forensic age, and the attorneys are only beginning to know him; and there is Jones on the second floor, treble your forensic age, and he said to me yesterday that the attorneys did not know him, and he was d——d if he thought they ever would. And here are

you, a younger man, and yet they know you,'—that was satisfactory, Di, wasn't it, coming from such an eminent legal functionary?"

Now the letter marked *Immediate* was from Bill's own upholsterer, to the effect that if his long outstanding bill were not paid within twenty-four hours, an execution would be put into the Villa at Kew.

After Annesley's departure Harcourt drove up. Diana was shocked to see how ill her cousin looked, and in her impulsive affectionate manner put one arm caressingly on his shoulder, and turned up her face to be kissed. But just as he was stooping to salute her, his eyes became fixed on an adjacent point, his frame rigid, and shrieking, "She comes! she comes!" he sank swooning upon the grass. So soon as Fred had recovered Diana pressed him to tell her who it was he saw coming, and why the person's advent should be so terrible as to frighten him into a swoon. Two or three times he seemed upon the point of unburthening his mind, but always stopped short

of divulging his secret, alleging as an excuse that it would make his companion fear him.

"I have that upon my mind," he said despondingly, which has sent many a stronger man than myself to the grave. If you knew all you never would have courage to remain alone with me again. I read in your face that you think my secret is that I am mad, or threatened with madness, but you are wrong ; alas, my impending fate is something very different, although quite as horrible.

CHAPTER VI.

FADING BEAUTY—THE LIBAVIAN SYSTEM OF TRANSFUSION, WHEREBY THE AGED MAY BE RESTORED TO YOUTH—THE SORROWS OF A DECLINING BELLE.

Only those who have felt it can realise the keenness of the agony and despair which a pretty woman feels when she finds the hand of Time depriving her of the magic spells of beauty, when the men refuse to listen to the voice of the charmer "charm she never so wisely." There is an exquisite bliss in the consciousness of power, which to those who have once tasted becomes a necessary of life. Diana felt like the emperor deprived of his sceptre, the magician of his wand, the sorcerer of his familiar spirit—existence seemed to her a blank, and she was ready to dare anything and everything to become again an enchantress surrounded by

Cicisbei sighing, "Alas, thy spell too fast hath bound me within its magic chain."

While she was in this mood, it came to her ears that there was now residing in the neighbourhood of London, a person who was said to be able to restore the faded to beauty, and even the aged to youth, by transfusing into their veins the blood of the young. The nature of Diana's emotions upon receiving this startling intelligence can be gathered from the lines "Give back my Youth," which have already appeared in another part of this work. These verses were found in her diary on the same page as that which bore the record of the reception of the news relating to the system of rejuvenation. From the same source, we learn also, that she questioned Dr. Abernethy upon the subject, and his reply was to this effect: "Undoubtedly one of the boldest, the most extraordinary, and the most ingenious attempts ever made to lengthen the period of human life, and to restore departed youth and beauty, was the famous

scheme of transfusion recommended by Andrea Libavius, Professor of Medicine and Chemistry in the University of Halle, in the year 1615, which consisted in the direct introduction of youthful blood into the veins of the patient." He went on to say that the most important and surprising results were obtained by this artificial mode of renovating the worn-out human machine, and great hopes were excited of the future improvement and progress of this new art. But so many children were bled to death to supply the demand for youthful vitality, and these selfish murders being daily increasing to an alarming extent, the various governments of Europe interfered and put a stop to the practice of transfusion.

"What is the loss of a lover to the loss of beauty," said Diana to her cousin, Beatrice Howard, who had been complaining hitherto of the treatment which she had received from the Honourable Tom Brunker, "the first can be easily replaced: the latter is too often irreparable.

The mere possession of such charms as yours would be to me a source of such exquisite pleasure, that no misfortune which did not touch them could make me unhappy. What is your misery to mine? My complexion fading! My hair turning white! My figure degenerating! My teeth decaying! I knew not how dear my beauty was to me until now that it is fading. I feel that everything which I have would I give to get it back. Alas, what is life without youth and beauty! They are the poetry of existence. Without these life to me is hateful. Forget that I am growing old? As well bid the condemned criminal forget his coming doom! Although I avoid my glass, I see my fading beauty mirrored in every countenance. I see it in the pitying looks of my friends and in the satirical glances of my enemies: the former persecute me with assurances that I never looked better or younger, and the latter, by pretended sympathy and reiterated inquiries relative to my state of health. I see it in the altered

demeanour of the men. The selfish avoid me; and the good-natured cannot conceal that they are bored by my society, and anxious to get away. I never feel happy in the society of the old; and yet, the youthful make up their parties without me, making matters worse by alleging, as an excuse, that the social gatherings are exclusively juvenile. I cannot endure this continued mortification: I cannot endure the thought of being old, or even of being thought old by others. I have such a horror of being deserted by the society of youth, and obliged to endure solitude, or the still worse companionship of the wrinkled faces, and the grave countenances of age, that death itself with all its terrors, would be preferable to such a life of misery. I yearn for the ringing laughter, the merry looks, the exuberant spirits, and the wild frolics of youth, and would do anything, and dare anything, to bring back that happy period when I could join in their games without being thought an intruder, and a check upon their freedom."

"You are not old," said Beatrice soothingly. "The fading of your beauty has some other origin. Have you followed my advice and consulted Doctor Abernethy?"

"I have. He attributed the decadence of my charms to a paucity of Ozone in my system, and promised renewed loveliness if such rules were followed as would promote the assimilation of that subtle element. At parting he gave me what purported to be a prescription. It was written in Latin, so I brought it to Fred Harcourt to see what it was about. This is the translation:—

OZONE.

It comes when Heaven's dread voice is heard,
When lightnings flash and thunders groan;
It comes upon the wings of storm,
That subtle thing we call Ozone.
Distilled in yonder sunny Heavens,
Where all is bright and all eternal,
Its mission seems to bear to Earth,
Some part of Heaven's unfading vernal.

When floating on the balmy breeze
That fans the flower at dewy morn,

It paints the crimson on the rose,
And the pure snow tint on the morn,
Then offer it thy fading cheek,
Its tender bloom—decaying never,
Makes—like an Angel's potent breath—
The mortal Beautiful for Ever.

“To these verses was appended a note stating that the atmosphere being richest in Ozone in those situations furthest removed from cities and crowds, and the air at early morning being more highly charged with it than at any other part of the day; therefore the fading cheek, desirous of replacing the lost bloom, should fly to some mountain retreat, far removed from the haunts of men, and, rising daily at dawn, continue wandering about the hills until sun-set, allowing the ozonised air free access to the face. This course, if persistently and faithfully carried out, would, in less than three months, produce the most surprising and pleasing results, and in such cases as the present, was never known to fail. “But,” continued Diana, while her eyes sparkled with indignation, “I confess, I put no faith in the vaunted

specific, and besides, the remedy would be worse than the disease. If Doctor Abernethy hoped, by this transparent artifice, to get me to retire to the country, and ~~to~~ induce me to rise early, **he will find himself greatly mistaken.** I can now dispense with his assistance; for there has come to London a woman, who has not only anticipated all his discoveries, but even carried them far beyond the goals he deemed it possible to reach. Her name is Cleopatra Ptolemy, and she resides in a mansion on the banks of the Thames."

"Of course this lady makes the poor dupes who believe in her power pay handsomely for their credulity?"

"No: that is the most extraordinary part of it! She refuses all remuneration for her services, whatever shape it may be offered in, gold or jewels. 'If you are rich,' she says to those who urge upon her some valuable present, 'give to some charity according to your means. If you are poor, remember that charity begins at home. I want nothing from you and will

take nothing from you.' Another strange circumstance is that all her patients who have been restored to youth and loveliness, become melancholy and desponding, maintain a mysterious reserve as to the secrets of the Temple, and are constantly saying to their friends, 'Whatever you do, for God's sake, never become like me, Beautiful for Ever.' It is said that she is one hundred and fifty years old, and yet she does not look more than twenty. Her beauty is marvellous.

"Never did nature turn out from its mould a more perfect figure, a nobler countenance, or a keener intellect. With a tact which is never at fault, a wit which is always ready, a self-possession which never fails, a brilliant imagination, a fervid eloquence, a never-flagging energy, an intuitive knowledge of character and a facility for adapting herself to every nature, an indomitable will before which all others collapse without a struggle: she seems a woman designed by nature to rule the world. People are drawn towards her as if

by a spell—there is a fascination about her which is irresistible. Even persons who have gone to the Temple prejudiced against her, have come back confessing the subtle charm of her presence.”

“Have you seen her?”

“I have; and she has promised to restore me to youth, upon certain conditions. The final arrangements are to be made to-morrow, when I am to attend one of her scientific seances, at which she has promised to show to her followers a startling proof of her power. She has promised to demonstrate that life when it leaves the body remains in the world as an inorganic substance, diffused through the atmosphere in the form of electricity; and that it can be artificially collected from thence, rendered amenable to chemical tests, and even applied to resuscitate the dead.”

“Dear Cousin Di,” said Beatrice, affectionately embracing her friend, “Do not go to this woman. I am afraid of her. You know nothing of her antecedents, or of the inner life of the Temple. How can

you be so credulous as to believe that there exists a secret by which the hand of Time may be forced to undo its work. I admit that the miracles of modern science are numerous and marvellous, but it is unreasonable to expect them to arrest the course of nature so far as to prevent the decay of youth. Why risk disgrace, and ruin, and even death, by an abortive attempt to evade the inevitable? Regard the phantom of Old Age steadily and resolutely, and its approach will be deprived of a great part of its terrors."

"Never," cried Diana, starting up in a state of much excitement, and throwing back her silvering locks with an air of desperate resolve, "I will *not* be old—I will *never* be old. To-morrow I will visit Cleopatra Ptolemy, and at any cost, at any risk, have my youth and beauty restored, through the introduction of juvenile blood into my veins by the Libavian system of transfusion."

"And if that fails—face the contingency boldly—if that fails, dear Di—what then?"

“If that fails, cousin Beatrice,” said the wretched woman, growing deadly pale, and speaking slowly and with difficulty, “if that fails then—then—*I will die.*”

CHAPTER VII.

RECALLED TO LIFE, A MIRACLE OF MODERN SCIENCE.

Upon the following day, in pursuance of the resolution recorded in the last chapter, Diana reached the Temple of Health, Youth, and Beauty, and on being ushered into the reception-room, which was fitted up in the manner of a laboratory and museum, found several ladies already there, examining with much curiosity the anatomical models and preparations. Shortly afterwards Cleopatra appeared and led the way to a curtained recess, containing a table, on which, covered with a white cloth, was something which bore the outlines of the human form. A shudder ran through Diana as she scanned the sheeted figure—mute and motionless it lay—mute, and yet, by its awful stillness, eloquently pro-

claiming to the startled looker-on that she was in the presence of the dead.

"Do not be alarmed," said Cleopatra, "here is nothing but the body of a poor girl who died in the Blank Hospital, a few days ago. Surely you have all been face to face with death, at some period of your lives, and must know that the sight is only terrible when we look on the pale face, motionless for ever, of some dear one, and watch in vain for those changes of expression with which we were familiar. You have never seen *these* features lit up with life, and therefore the absence of the phenomena of life will not shock you any more than would the changeless countenance of a figure of marble or wax."

The sheet was flung back exposing the face and form of a girl of fifteen or sixteen. Some of the visitors screamed, and others trembled and pressed closer together, but a second glance at the object of their terror re-assured all; there was nothing to appal in that pale, beautiful, motionless form, whose state but for the absence of

any symptom of respiration, the extreme pallor of the skin, the stillness of the features, and the glassy appearance of the eyes, might have been taken for one of calm deep sleep.

Cleopatra unlocked a box which stood near the bed, and the sides falling down disclosed to view a galvanic battery of huge size. The poles were brought in contact with the subject so as to place it within the electric circuit, and the machine set to work. The face of the corpse evinced some play of feature—the form trembled—shook—started up in a sitting posture seemingly instinct with life.

As soon as the emotion of the visitors had subsided sufficiently to permit the lecturer to proceed, she said :

“In the year 1790, Signora Galvani, the wife of an eminent Bolognese physiologist, while suffering from influenza, ordered her husband to prepare a dish of frogs—a delicacy very easy of digestion. The dead frogs, having been prepared for cooking by removing the epidermis, were

accidentally brought near an electric machine in motion, and immediately exhibited what seemed to be signs of vitality. The phenomena excited great astonishment in the philosophical mind of the Bolognese physiologist, and he set himself to work to investigate the cause of the seeming resuscitation. By an extended series of experiments on frogs he discovered that their muscles answered freely to the impulse of electricity; and he followed up the matter with so much skill, perseverance and success, as to give his name to certain electrical properties. For further particulars, I must refer you to the account of his discoveries, published by him, in 1791, and entitled, 'Aloysu Galvani de Viribus Electricitatis in Motu Musculari Commentarius.' The famous Volta followed Galvani in his researches, and gave us the Voltaic pile, by which the force of the electric current is greatly increased. Subsequent experiments upon the dead human body showed, that electricity calls into action the muscles of every member of the body to which it can

be directly applied—not only can the limbs be made to move, but digestion, respiration, and the action of the heart, can be carried on after death has taken place. Thus, nearly one hundred years ago, an essence was discovered capable of producing in the animal body the phenomena of life. The electric fluid is omnipresent—it pervades all space, and everything space contains. It is generated by friction, and by chemical decomposition. Force, and heat, and electricity, are different forms of the same thing. Now, the swiftly moving blood of the animal generates, by its friction, electricity along the whole of the ramifications of the veins and arteries. But friction is not the only agent at work in supplying the animal with electricity, the chief supply is derived from the chemical decomposition of the various parts of the body, and the combustion of the blood by the union of its carbon with the oxygen of the atmosphere.

“This question will now naturally present itself to your mind: Is not this

essence identical with the very influence which causes us to live—is it not the same as vital force? The answer must be in the affirmative. You may well inquire how it is that physicians have hitherto failed to employ electricity with success as a remedy in decay of nervous energy or old age. I reply: because they do not offer it to the body in the manner that nature offers it, that is, through the circulation. This is my grand secret—I impart electricity directly to the blood; applied in any other way the effect can be only local.

“In that which I have shown you, behold a discovery which promises unspeakable advantages to the human race, and immortal fame to its author! Behold the dawn of an universal revolution! A new race of men shall arise, shall overspread the earth, to embellish it by their virtues, and render it fertile by their industry. Neither vice nor ignorance shall stop their active career; they will know our calamities only from the records of his-

tory. The prolonged duration of their life will enable them to accomplish the most laudable undertakings. The tranquil, the innocent gratifications of that primeval age will be restored, wherein man laboured without toil, and lived without sorrow. Mothers will no longer be subject to pain and danger in the fulfilment of their holy mission; their progeny will be more robust and brave; the now rugged and difficult path of education will be rendered smooth and easy, and hereditary complaints and diseases will be for ever banished from the future auspicious race. Fathers rejoicing will see their posterity of the fourth and fifth generations. Animals and plants, no less susceptible of the electric power than man, will be exempt from the reproach of barrenness and the ravages of distemper. The flocks in the fields, and the plants in the gardens, will be more vigorous and nourishing, and the trees will bear more beautiful and grateful fruits. The human race, once endowed with elementary power, will probably rise

to still more sublime and astonishing effects of nature : who indeed is able to pronounce with certainty, how far this salutary influence may extend ? To restore health to the sick, youth to the aged, beauty to the faded, and life to the pale cheek of the dead, these are miracles of modern science which I *have* accomplished, the problem which I am now *hoping* to solve is to bring back those dear ones of whom he has robbed us, and whose bodies have already crumbled into dust ; yes—incredible as it may seem—I believe that the body after it has returned to its primitive elements may be again built up into the original individual, earth from earth, dust from dust, ash from ash. I behold in the distant future mankind restored to its pristine immortality, the element of decay banished from the earth, and the human form etherialised, immortalised, beautiful for ever, wandering through gardens blooming with an eternal spring. Yes, you may yet live to see this world become an Eden, like that in which our first parents com-

menced life; you may live to wander in a Paradise, where all are young and all lovely, the birds ever singing and the flowers never withering, neither age nor disease, nor death having power to enter.

“I see many here in whose faces are mirrored the beautiful lines of the poet :

My heart is weary, and my spirit pants
 Beneath the heat and burden of the day ;
 Would that I could regain those shady haunts
 Where once with Hope I dreamed the hours away,
 Giving my thoughts to tales of old romance,
 And yielding up my soul to youth's delicious trance.

“Believe him not when he tells you that such aspirations are vain, the sorcerer science *will* enable you once more to tread with the buoyant step of youth the green hill side. The dust which clogs your weary feet *shall* be shaken off, and you *shall* travel back to the pleasant nooks of early days. The ruined shrines where once your spirit worshipped, when with sweet and passionless devotion it could twine its strong affections round earth's holiest things, yet bear away no stains

upon its snowy wings, shall be reared again, the dispersed fragments carefully gathered, and the fabrics restored to all their original beauty, and with all their old surroundings. The sun of life again shall rise upon your path, the fragrant breath of budding spring again charm your senses. With unfurrowed brow and tender blooming cheek will return all childhood's sunny thoughts, and in the joys of this new existence you will forget the dark and blotted pages of the past. Yes! I swear, that if you have faith and courage to go through the necessary ordeal, you shall be Restored to Youth.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD LOVE.

The purple tints of sunset had drawn Diana and Harcourt to the western window to watch the magnificent phenomena, when the latter said:

“And so, cousin Di, Lord Plantagenet is going to marry your mama. How strange!”

“Not at all strange,” returned the girl. “He loved her in his early youth, when she was the beautiful Miss Hautville, and he plain Mr. Plantagenet; a poor subaltern in the army. His regiment was ordered abroad. Upon his return to England, after an absence of ten years, he found her married to papa. After poor papa died, his lordship was still too angry with mama for not having been true to the first love, to ask her to be his wife. He could

not forgive her. He could not forget the years of pain which she had caused him to suffer. His youth had vanished; the best years of his life had passed away in tantalising dreams of the past, and of what *might* have been. That feeling of anger, however, has been gradually wearing away, and it has now sufficiently subsided to allow him to desire a union with her. How much he loved her in her youth, these verses, which I found among some old papers, prove. They were written immediately after the first meeting, on his return to England:—

TO CLARA BEAUCLERC.

I have seen her again —
Like a vision it seemed!
Yet not *this* was the meeting
Of which I had dreamed,
When some ten years ago,
With a pulse beating high,
Her soft lips I pressed
In a last sweet good-by.

I have seen her—yet no!
Oh, it is not the same!

This Clara the title
Of matron can claim.
'T was a maiden *I* loved,
And a maiden to me,
While Fancy has magic,
She ever shall be!

Then wake, memory, wake,
And to Fancy's aid go,
While she brings back the dear one
Of ten years ago,
With the softness I marked
In her lip, and her eye,
When she gave me at parting
That last sweet "good-by."

Let *him* have the *present*,
The past let *me* claim,
His Clara is fading;
Mine ever the same:—
His Clara's fair charms
One by one must depart:
While *mine* shall remain
Ever fresh in my heart!

Diana complained that her cousin Henry had invented an absurd story, to account for what must seem to those who were not acquainted with the real circumstances of the case a very singular event, and was

circulating it in Brighton. This story was to the effect that Diana, resolving before giving herself irrevocably to Annesley to make one more effort to draw a proposal from Plantagenet, administered to that gentleman a love philter of Indian hemp; but that just as it was beginning to work, Aunt Maud appeared in the fish pond, in the character of Venus rising from the sea, and that when the dutiful niece returned from placing her demented relative under surveillance, she was dismayed to find that her mother had been reaping where the daughter had sowed, his lordship, under the influence of the hempen potion, having offered himself to Mrs. Beauclerc, who at once, cruelly and unnaturally neglectful of her daughter's claims and long-cherished hopes, accepted the tendered matrimonial alliance.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPECTRE SKELETON.

On the eve of the day on which the sheepish young curate of St. Incense was invited to exhibit his skill by killing six celibate birds with one stone, that is to say, on the evening before that fixed for the triple wedding, Diana was sitting alone in the drawingroom when Beatrice rushed in with an expression of dismay.

“I have done it,” she said, “I have done it at last, and here I am, in the predicament of the last rose of summer, left blooming alone. I have quarrelled with Fred and he has gone off, and left me, the lone one, to pine on the stem. I don’t know whether to laugh or cry—it is so absurd, and yet so very awkward. Just imagine, my dear, to be deserted on the eve of the wedding, with your bridal

dress, your cake, and your trousseau, all bought and triumphantly exhibited to envious friends. I can't help laughing although I feel that I ought to cry," and she threw herself down beside her friend, in a burst of merriment.

"I don't think it is a laughing matter at all, dear," said Diana, "you know how sensitive and eccentric he is—why, he'd think nothing of going back to his cave in Cumberland if he was huffed, and leaving you to go up to the altar alone. What was it all about?"

"Oh! a mere trifle. You know he sometimes can't think of anything to say, and then he becomes desperate, and rather than be silent, talks nonsense. Now I always get in a rage when I find people *making* conversation, and I said to him: 'You fool, if you have not got anything to say, hold your tongue: if you can't talk sense, at least don't talk nonsense.' He returned, that he knew he was a fool to care about me so much when I treated him so badly, when even I could not help

fighting with him on the wedding eve. I answered:—he replied. I retorted:—he rejoined. I grew angry:—he grew melancholy, and sighed like a furnace. This made me more furious. I said cruel things, and he became dejected: and at last stammered, ‘If you—you—you mean all you say, you can only be marrying me for my money?’ I mimicked his agitated stutter, replying: ‘Who—who—who’d marry you for anything else?’ Thereupon he fell into a state of wild despair, clapped his hat upon his head, and shouting, ‘I know what to do now! I know what to do now!’—rushed from the room. Was it not mysterious—what could he be going to do?”

“Perhaps commit suicide, dear,” suggested Di, with much composure.

“Oh, no,” returned the other laughing: “they only do that kind of thing in France. If I thought there were any danger of *that* you would not see me so merry: I am not quite so heartless as people imagine. No, no: it is some

piece of supreme folly he contemplates without a touch of tragedy in it."

"Perhaps to cancel his very liberal settlements, dear, to cut down your pin money, or some revenge like that—men are so mean."

"No! no! no! Fred's revenges always take a generous turn. If I thought he was capable of doing what you say I would cast him off at once—not for the loss of the money—I am not so mercenary as people think—but because I could never love him afterwards. I can forgive anything in a man but meanness, and I like Fred, in spite of his follies, because he is the only man I know that I have never detected in a mean action, or known to do an ill-natured thing, or think or say an unkind word. In his sentiments he is always noble, and generous, and confiding, and innocent, and modest, and I love him for it, and I am marrying him for it."

"Ahem!" coughed Diana: "if he had no money would you marry him?"

"I would not. I have been brought up

with expensive tastes, and would be miserable with a poor man. But, although I would not marry a poor man, I would not marry the richest bachelor in the world—unless I liked him.”

“Well, dear, I am sure I hope you may be happy with him—but, ahem: don’t you think now Fred is a little—just a little eccentric?”

“What do you mean, Diana?”

“Oh! nothing dear—I only meant that he was a little odd, you know—just a little queer, you know—probably the eccentricities of genius, or the sensitiveness of a highly wrought organisation, you know—but they *do* tell such queer stories about him!—Hall Hautville and Bill Banbury do.”

“Yes: but there is not a word of truth in them.”

“I am sure, dear, I am very glad to hear it. But I must say, I myself have seen him at times very odd—in fact, behave in the strangest manner—fix his eyes on a particular spot, and shrieking,

‘she comes! she comes!’ fall down in a swoon. People will talk, you know, and the general opinion is that his mind has become unsettled by the death of his wife, and that he is always expecting to see her ghost.”

Beatrice became at once very grave and a tear gathered in her eye. “If I tell you a secret,” she asked, “will you swear to preserve it?”

“Inviolably! You know my disposition—red hot pincers would not force me to divulge that which was confided to me.”

“I know I can trust you—give me your hand. He is haunted — followed by the phantom of his dead wife.”

Diana shrieked, and hid her face on the bosom of her companion. “Oh!” she said, “why did you tell me—I shall be afraid to sleep alone to-night. Oh! thank goodness, I am going to be married to-morrow, and will in future have company during the dark nights—you will hardly believe me, but one reason I am taking my Bill is to

have him to frighten away the ghosts from my bed, and talk to me when I have a nightmare."

"Ah! you might have some reason to be frightened if you saw all that poor Fred sees. But the phantom by which he has for many years been followed is not a ghost or disembodied spirit, as you, silly girl, seem to fancy; it is nothing more than the creation of a fevered imagination: physiologists call it a sensorial illusion. He met it first at the grave of his wife, on the night of her interment, having been conducted to the scene by her voice. He had no suspicion at first of the true nature of the appearance, for it was apparent to all his senses, and seemed quite like a real person. It led him—or he fancied it led him—to an hotel, and there one Doctor Campbell informed him of the character of the spectre, telling him that it was nothing more than a symptom of cerebral disorder, a phantom as unreal as those seen in dreams. But the curious part of the matter is, that after Fred re-

turned home, a search was made for the hotel in which he alleged that he had sojourned, and for Doctor Campbell, and as neither could be found, Doctor Abernethy is of opinion that they also were nothing more than phantasmata, and at the very time Fred imagined that he was living in the hotel, he was lying on Bianca's grave in a trance. Since then the phantom has several times appeared to him, and until lately he was always so frightened by its advent, that no sooner did he see it than he swooned. Within the last few months, he hired as valet a man whose sole recommendation was that many years ago he lived in the service of the Mendozas. Since the arrival of this person, the visits of the phantom have been much more frequent. The reason is evident: the valet's presence, by the association of ideas, revives in poor Fred's mind the image of his dead wife, and keeps her constantly before him. So frequent have her visits been lately, that he has at last ceased to be terrified by them, and has

even learned to regard them with interest, as a subject for scientific speculation. He is exceedingly amused by the idea that while talking with her, he is, as it were, conversing with himself; for, of course, it is *his own brain* that furnishes *her* with ideas, and words to express them. He says it is very strange that she always gets the best of him in argument, and talks much more cleverly than ever he talked in his life: that while he is always dull, her conversation is ever brilliant, sparkling, and fascinating. Fred has repeated to me some of her good things, and they are wonderfully witty. Doctor Abernethy says that in this disorder the utterances of the phantom, or of the patient when speaking in the third person, often exhibit an eloquence and grasp of intellect wholly foreign to the brain in the normal state; a species of inspiration such as that which characterizes the occasional frenzy of the poetical temperament. Under its influence fools have suddenly, but temporarily, been endowed with a god-like wisdom; and

silly women, with a profound insight into the future. The sibyls and pythonesses of old were persons labouring under this malady, for it is usually attended with a disposition to prophesy. Men have been known to live all their lives with nymphs evoked by this disease, drinking in wisdom from their lips like Numa Pompilius from the lips of the Nymph Egeria, or Saint Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, from *his* Nymph. Sometimes patients labouring under this malady can only *see* the phantoms evoked by it, without being able to *feel* them; and sometimes they *feel* bodies without being able to *see* anything; and sometimes they *hear* voices in the air close beside them, as if proceeding from *invisible* persons; and sometimes a form comes, as in Fred's case, which can be both *seen*, and *felt*, and *heard*."

"This is dreadful! I know to-night cold hands will catch hold of my legs as I get into bed; invisible bodies will get between me and the wall; voices will sound in my ears; shadowy figures draw my cur-

tains. I will never be able to look in my mirror without seeing a horrid phantom peeping over my shoulder, nor to enter my room without fearing to behold a grim spectre sitting in my easy chair. You say these phantoms are produced by disease; is the malady common?"

"Frightfully prevalent, although the world does not know it. It is not, strictly speaking, a disease, but merely a disorder, and may be produced, even in a healthy person, in an instant, by fear, awe, or expectation of seeing or hearing something supernatural. You see cases recorded of it in the paper every day, and for every one recorded, there are a thousand unrecorded, for the unfortunate patients—unwilling to become an object of fear to their nervous friends, of impertinent curiosity to others, or of being thought threatened with insanity—preserve their dreadful secret [as in the case of the gentleman haunted by the spectral cat, mentioned by Sir Walter Scott] even from their medical advisers. Not very

long ago, the inhabitants of Ballybay, a small town in Ireland, were thrown into a state of great excitement by a report, that the phantom of a woman, the wife of the principal innkeeper, who had died suddenly a few days before, and whose body was lying in the deserted house, awaiting an inquest, was to be seen sitting in the window with a child in her arms. Crowds collected in front of the unoccupied building, and many persons of nervous and impressible organization *saw* the *apparition*. This proves how *infectious* the disorder is. One person sees a spectre, and then the malady spreads like an epidemic. In yesterday's paper, I read that the daughter of the farmer whose house was the scene of that agrarian outrage which now monopolises public attention, has been seized with this terrible malady. She fancies she sees a phantom of a horrible and loathsome nature—what, the report does not say—it is ever before her and she is sinking under the terror it inspires. Here we have the malady produced by mental

shock. Sometimes it is the result of physical disease, as in the celebrated case of Mons. Nicolai, a bookseller of Berlin: for three months his rooms were crowded by spectres of people living, and people dead, people he knew, and people he never saw before in his life. These apparitions moved about before him as if at a ball, talking to him and to each other. In another case, a gentleman was visited every night by a phantom hag who beat him with a crutch. In a third very instructive one—the patient being a friend of Sir David Brewster's—not only did bodies come without voices, but also voices without bodies. In another case, which occurred quite lately at Stratford-upon-Avon, a family named Davis were haunted by phantoms carrying their heads under their arms. There are several cases on record of people imagining themselves married to phantoms: Vincentius relates the case of a young man of Sicily who lived with a phantom as if it were his wife. Oh! a wonderful thing indeed, my

dear, is the imagination! I could relate to you several cases of women who believed themselves to be wedded to phantoms, thus the celebrated Magdalena Crucia Hispana fancied she had married the devil. But the phantoms which appeared to the men were generally handsome: Hector Boethius, in his history of Scotland, relates the case of a youth of Aberdeen who was molested by a phantom in the form of the loveliest woman he ever saw. St. Dunstan was similarly tempted. Hieronimus tells how a poor monk was persecuted by the blandishments of a succubus—that's a phantom, dear—of stupendous beauty and amiableness. Menippus, the scholar of the philosopher Demetrius, was the object of similar attentions from a lovely walking ghost. It is a common thing for great grief to produce the malady, and also for it to make its first appearance at the grave of the deceased, as in poor Fred's case. Thus Doctor Bartholomew Fays tells how a daughter of one Gervaise, who lived at the sign of the Red Horse, in Paris, met a

phantom black man at her father's tomb, and another case in which a woman met at her grandfather's grave the apparition of the dead man in a winding sheet. Again, Alexander relates the case of a man who the very night that he buried a dear friend, and just after he had got into bed, discovered the phantom of the deceased getting in beside him, and felt its bare foot as cold as ice."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Di, half laughing, half crying, "even Bill will be no protection to me after this. But, Beatrice, do you know any cases of men been haunted by their dead wives, like poor Fred?"

"O plenty, dear, plenty—why it is quite common. There was the celebrated instance of Propertuis, whose mistress returned to him on the night of her funeral. Sabinus relates the case of a noble gentleman of Bavaria, whose wife thus seemed to return to him, and he lived with the spectre for many years. Sir Walter Scott relates the case of a poor man who on

three nights running was visited by the phantom of his deceased wife. But it is curious that Doctor Abernethy has never heard a case of a deceased man returning to his wife."

"I am so glad," said Di, "for if I should be unfortunate enough to lose my Bill I would not like to have him coming back to me. But is this terrible malady *really* so common?"

"Common, my dear. I repeat if the public knew how common it is they would be appalled; but the patients keep their secrets, not liking to become the subject of impertinent curiosity or idle fear. The Countess of Thanet was visited by the phantom of her daughter, Lady Hatton. Lady Diana Rich saw the phantom of herself. Mr. Trahern, bachelor of divinity, chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman, was visited by a spectral boy in a red waistcoat. The daughter of Sir William Wharton met her own double. Sir Richard Napier also saw his phantom self. Casparus Von Spar was called on

by the spectre of Martin Luther. William Barwood saw the phantom of the murdered Mrs. Lofthouse, and this, by a curious chain of circumstances, led to the conviction of the man who committed the crime. Edward Magall was tempted to murder Elizabeth Ringrose by a phantom fiend. St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, held frequent conversation with a beautiful female spectre. Charles the Simple of France was frightened into simplicity by an apparition. Swedenborg was haunted by phantoms of the apostles, and they conversed with him. Doctor Scott, of Broad Street, was visited by a spectral old gentleman wearing a black velvet gown and a long wig. Lady Pennyman, the wife of Sir John Pennyman, had a friend named Mrs. Atkins, who, on sleeping in a haunted room which contained an iron cage, in which an unfortunate heir to a large property had been starved to death by a wicked and avaricious uncle, saw the phantom of the deceased youth leaning against the cage, its form rigid,

bony, and distorted, its eyes open, but glazed, its hands clenched, and its mouth violently compressed. The Rev. Mr. Ruddle, minister of Launceston, in Cornwall, on more than one occasion, in a certain spot, met an apparition in the shape of one Dorothy Dingly, a woman dead eight years. Mr. Thomas Lilly, the son of a farmer in the parish of Kelso, in Roxburghshire, was visited by a spectral old man, in an antique garb, who said, 'There is death in the pot.' Captain Barnaby and his whole crew saw the apparition of the deceased Mr. Booty. Thomas Goddard, of Marlborough Wills, was visited by a phantom in the shape of the deceased Edward Avon. Sir John Sherbrooke and General Wynward both saw a phantom in the shape of a brother of the latter, who happened to die about the same time. A son of Mr. Pringle, of Clifton Park, in the South of Scotland, was visited by the phantom of a deceased sister. Samuel Wallace, of Stamford, in Lincoln, was visited by a phantom which

gave him to understand that it was the ancient Abraham. Doctor Donne, physician to Lord Hay [then ambassador to the Court of France], was visited by a phantom in the shape of his wife, and in its arms seemed a dead child. Mr. Gleditsh, professor of natural philosophy at Berlin, saw the phantom form of the deceased Maupertius, formerly president of the Berlin Academy. Henry the Fourth of France was spoken to by a spectre in the forest of Fontainebleau. Caishio, the son of Sir John Burrowes, was haunted, until he was shot, by the phantom of a woman whom he had driven into committing suicide. Mrs. Brown, the sister-in-law of Lord Coningsby, was visited by the phantom of her murdered brother. A clerk in the employment of Sir Walter Long, of Draycot, was assaulted by a spectral hand without a body. Mr. Lowes was frequently visited by the phantom of Sir George Villiers, and so was the Duke of Buckingham. Sir John Warr's chaplain was visited by an apparition in the shape

of a venerable old man. But I will not tire you by a repetition of all the cases that Doctor Abernethy has related to me, suffice it to say that they are legion. Phantom seeing is sometimes epidemic, like any other disease, and in the seventeenth century immense numbers of people were frightened to death by phantoms of their deceased friends coming to them and seeming to suck their blood; this was called the vampire epidemic. The phantom producing malady is prevalent in many countries under the name of second sight, and in particular families, giving rise to the superstition of ghosts, banshees, and such like."

"And does this awful malady ever kill people?"

"Alas, yes. Sometimes the phantom predicts the death of the person, and then the patient dies of believing that he is going to die; and sometimes the spectres appear in such a horrible shape that the patient is frightened to death. Thus died Theodoricum, King of the Ostrogoths, who

was amazed by seeing the phantom head of a man whom he had decapitated appear in the mouth of a huge fish which had been served up for dinner. Thus also died Crescentium, the Pope's nuncio. A big black dog of terrible aspect entered his room, he was seized with horror, the dog seemed to him to get upon his bed, and he died begging the people to take it off. O poor Fred! poor Fred!" and Beatrice began to cry.

"But, dear, Fred has grown accustomed to *his* phantom, you say, which, being only the form of a beautiful woman whom he tenderly loved, ought not to appal him."

"Alas, alas, it is sometimes the character of this malady for the phantoms to change from a pleasant form to a horrible form, and now the spectre of Bianca has disappeared, and is replaced by one whose very aspect freezes his soul with dread—oh, it is terrible! terrible!!—firm as my nerves are, I tremble when I think of that which he nightly sees."

“ Oh, come closer to me—let me clasp you in my arms—hug me tight—wh—wh—what is it ?”

“ Diana, it is a skeleton.”

Diana uttered a dismal shriek. “ Oh, say you are only joking,” she entreated—“ say that you only said it to frighten me ?—say that there is *no* disorder in which such ghastly objects are permitted to appear to the living ?”

“ Diana, you know on such a subject I would not jest.”

“ And to think that I have been alone with him this very day—and may be the *thing* was with him all the time ! Oh, it was cruel to leave me in ignorance of the kind of visitors who attend him !”

“ Since you are so frightened, I am sorry that I told you. Sit up, and behave like a rational being. One would fancy that *his* seeing these things would cause *you* to see them also.”

“ And it will, I feel that it will—you said the malady was infectious. How can you marry a man who is haunted by a skeleton ?”

“ I pity him; and Doctor Abernethy says that marriage is the only chance he has of being cured, and that if he is not cured *at once* he will die. A few more visits of this apparition may kill him—one more may do it. And therefore it is that I am so anxious about him. I had resolved to keep him with me all day, and to sit up with him all night; for such is the power of love that the spectre never appears while I am with him. And now my hasty temper and mischievous tongue have sent him out perhaps to his death. Poor boy, I am always fighting with him, his absurd innocence and ridiculous over anxiety to please me provoke me so. A thousand times have I resolved never to fight with him again, and a thousand times have I broken my vow, and then repented and vowed again. *He* never gets in a passion with *me*, never makes a harsh answer, but meekly apologises for being so innocent and so fond of me; becomes dejected, his lip begins to quiver, the tears start to his eyes, and then I feel how cruel I have been, and kiss him, and we make it up. But *this* time,

he rushed off without the kiss, and I am very uneasy. For you must know that his terror of this phantom to-day seemed so great that Doctor Abernethy, fearing that the poor lad's life might succumb to it, has by an artifice induced him to believe that the skeleton is a *real* skeleton, and its appearance a trick of Bill Banbury's to frighten him—one of those cruel practical jokes for which the gallant Adonis is so famous. The doctor procured a skeleton from London, and showed it to Fred concealed in one of the out-houses. And now all Fred's fear of the apparition is gone, and if he meets the spectre he will be certain to follow it; and, alas, it is too often the character of these dreadful phantoms to lead their pursuers into danger, over precipices, or into the sea, or on railways when a train is coming up, or something of that kind. It is quite a common thing for these deceitful appearances to lead the patient out of a three storey window, or along the roofs of houses so steep that he is certain to lose his footing and with it his life, so you may imagine my uneasiness."

"Alas," said Diana, with a deep sigh, "there is a skeleton in *my* closet, too—Beatrice, I am sitting on a mine!"

"Bless me, child—what kind of a mine?" asked Beatrice with a faint smile—"I hope it may be a gold mine!"

"As if you didn't know what kind of a mine!" returned the other, peevishly. "A mine, of course, which at any moment may go off and blow me into atoms."

"My dear, you are too romantic—you are always crying 'wolf, wolf,' when there is no wolf; or rather 'mine, mine' when there is no mine. You love to imagine yourself a heroine surrounded by a thousand dangers which threaten every moment to annihilate her. You think real life is like the fevered existence painted by the sensation novel, where beauty is always being caught in a web in the centre of which a great big spider of the villain tribe stands ready to devour her. You are ever fancying yourself the focus of plots and intrigues, and too late discover them to be nothing more than practical jokes designed to ridicule your

weakness—ever by your silly credulity tempting Hall Hautville, and Ned Norton, and that set, to fool you into thinking that you are a heroine in danger. How many dark plots and diabolical schemes have you not discovered, which subsequently proved to be nothing more than webs woven by these mischievous wags to get up a laugh against you ?”

“ But this time, I can assure you,” returned Di sobbing, and wringing her hands, “ that there can be no deception in the matter. *I am sitting upon a mine.*”

“ Wolf! Wolf!”

“ Yet the wolf came at last, and then those who had refused to attend to the call for assistance were sorry.”

“ That is true. Well, Di, you see I am now grave: pour your sorrows into my sympathising bosom, and let my sagacious head devise some means of saving the poor little entangled fly from the devouring jaws of the blood sucking spider.”

“ Cleopatra Ptolemy seems to know all about me and my engagement with my Bill,

and I think she has some secret reason for hating me, and is maturing some deep revenge. It is true that she has kept her promise with me. She has restored me to youth: I feel and look ten years younger since I have had children's blood infused into my veins. My figure has fined down; my flesh grown firm and elastic; my skin free from pimples, fresh looking and diaphenous; my eyes bright and sparkling—Cleopatra has faithfully performed her promise, has revived my charms, and restored me to the first freshness of youth. But what a terrible price must I pay for this gratification! Oh! Beatrice, beware this subtle woman, and although you find all that you care for and all you hope for slipping away from you with the decay of your personal attractions, let nothing tempt *you* to become like *me*—BEAUTIFUL FOREVER. And the deceitful way in which this smiling fiend works her wickedness—she herself is always uttering noble sentiments—you would imagine her to be a mirror of virtue, and she never directly

does any act which can compromise her: the wickedness is all worked by proxy, and she pretends to be utterly unconscious of that which is going on; and such a finished actor is she that there are times when I believe her to be as innocent as she looks. But there is one of her assistants, who calls himself Diomedes the Egyptian, who unhappily has fallen in love with me although I gave him no encouragement. His frantic passion permits him to keep no secrets from me, and he has told me such horrible things about his mistress that my very hair stands on end when I think of them. He says that he knows that she feels for me the most intense hatred, and is developing some scheme of diabolical vengeance. He has promised to exert himself to find out what it is, and hopes to be able to frustrate it. Meantime I feel like a person standing in a labyrinth, on a mine of gunpowder, bound hand and foot, and his eyes blinded, but aware that a lighted fuse, whose length he fears to guess at, is slowly but surely burning down to the

combustible matter, and whose only hope is that some friend, who, he knows, is endeavouring to come to his aid, but who has not got the clue to the maze, may arrive in time."

The reply of Beatrice was arrested by the entrance of the butler with a letter, which he presented to Diana, who perceiving it to be from Diomedes, was instantly seized with a presentiment that the parcel contained an announcement of the bursting of the cloud which had so long shadowed her path. Her worst fears were more than realized by the contents of the document:—

"A discovery has been made that at your last visit Cleopatra transfused or injected your veins with the blood of a child suffering from a terrible disease, which destroys for ever the beauty of those whom it attacks—searing, pitting, withering, and shriveling the skin, changing the complexion to a livid white, spotted with red, and transforming the most charming face into a loathsome and revolting object, which friends fail to recognise, and no one

can view without shuddering. It was with a fiendish desire to increase the despair this loss of complexion would produce that this cruel woman has by her art revived your faded charms, so that they now shine with all their original lustre. But it is not yet too late to undo that which she has done, the virus has not yet had time to circulate through your system, and may be withdrawn in a manner which shall be explained. Lose not a moment, therefore, in meeting Diomedes under the *Great Cedar* in the lawn, where he waits to convey you to a place in which the operation may be performed."

When Diana had mastered the contents of the letter, she hurriedly begged her companion to make some excuse for her absence, and was leaving the room when Beatrice caught her arm and whispered:

"Think what you are going to do, dear? This letter is from a man whom you know to be an unscrupulous villain, and who has confessed to a passion for you. It seems expressly worded with a

view to excite your fears to the uttermost, to throw you into such a state of terror and agitation as that you will think *no price* too great to prevent the realization of the shocking picture he has drawn. If he were merely desirous of playing the part of a friendly physician whose only wish is to avert a threatened malady, he would not have coloured his painting so highly—*that* conduct savours of the unprincipled quack who is anxious to terrify the patient into submitting to any demand he may make. For God's sake do not go—think of the hour—think of your reputation—what excuse can I make for your absence?”

“Any think you like—I care not what people think—I am desperate. I am mad!—let me go—let me go, I tell you, or I will do you a mischief.”

“I will not let you go—I am stronger than you—I will call for help. Think of the day—your wedding day! Think of the hour—past one o'clock! Think of your reputation! Think”—

The sentence was fated to remain finished. Diana, throwing all her stren into one supreme effort, broke from kind hands which were endeavouring restrain her, and with the fleetness of fawn when it fancies itself pursued by hounds, fled into the forest of evergre which surrounded the house.

At this moment Harcourt came upon scene. Beatrice did not observe him u he touched her, and then she started : one awakening from a dream, and m some semi-incoherent remark. In a : ment she had resumed all her usual gai of manner. He placed a parchment in hands which he informed her was a d of gift of Howard Priory, with all estates attached. It was now hers with the incumbrance of a husband whom could not care for, and she was free marry any one she pleased, and might be as happy as he wished her.

“What is the meaning of all thi asked Beatrice, playfully. “Do : know, my fine fellow, that you are

going to get rid of me so easily. I am not to be pensioned off before I serve my full time."

"I will not sacrifice your happiness to mine. I love you too dearly to permit you to unite yourself to a man whom you do not care for—whom you say no girl could marry except for his money. Besides,"—here his voice faltered—"my life is precarious—I might die to-night, and then you would be left unprovided for. The late frequent visits of the horrid phantom prove that my strange malady must be approaching a termination, and death is near. Ah! dearest Beatrice, I feel a presentiment that the crisis of my singular disorder will take place *this very night*, and therefore I entreat you to take this parchment, so that my mind may be rendered easy by knowing that if I die you will lose nothing by the event."

"I would lose a good husband," said the girl, laughing, shaking him off and thrusting the deed into the fire; "and that would be very provoking, considering how scarce

they are, and how long I have been looking for one. I will not thank you for what you have done—but I will try and love you a little for it.” She gave him a kiss, and although her dimples were all appearing in a smile, a tear stood in each eye. “There,” she continued, gaily, “there is a kiss for you, and that dismisses the subject. And now seat yourself at the piano and sing something for me.”

She complained of the heat of the room, and opened the window, when a gust sweeping through extinguished both the candles.

The moon was full, and at the moment unclouded: thus, parts of the room were illuminated, and others in deep shadow. The piano received the rays, but the recess behind it got none. Into this recess Beatrice retired, while Harcourt seated himself at the piano, and, in a fine deep bass, sang as follows:—

COME, SAY IN WHAT MOOD?

COME, say in what mood is the loved one most dear,
When the clouds are collecting, or the Azure is clear?

Shall her fair cheek assume, shall her bright blue eye
borrow

The sunshine of mirth, or the shadow of sorrow?—
Come tell me the temper that most can enchain :
That springing from pleasure, or rising from pain ?

Those moments for me, there are some may observe,
When the bright beams of pleasure have thawed her
reserve :

When all her dear dimples appear in a smile :
Or her musical laughter our senses beguile,
And enchanted we see the soft magic of mirth
To a thousand new graces and charms giving birth.

Those moments for me, there are others may cry,
When sorrow is flooding the close-lidded eye,
And the bosom is heaving like the sea in a gale,
And the white lip is quivering like the storm beaten
sail.

When down from the Azure descends the soft rain,
There's a spell in each drop of that clear crystal chain.

Yet if mirth has its magic, and sorrow its spell,
In a union more potent enchantments must dwell—
See, the bow in the heavens! the few drops of mist
By the bright beams of promise and hope being kissed.
Yes—give *me* this mood—she is *never* so dear
As when to a smile she has added a tear.

The singer paused, seeming to listen
intently as if his attention were attracted
by some noise in the garden. Beatrice

thought she had heard something too : a measured footfall, accompanied by a peculiar rattling sound, such as might be produced by bones knocking against each other. The singular noise ceased with the music.

Harcourt, who had raised his head, and was gazing through the open window, apparently upon some awe-inspiring sight outside, for the eyes protruded, the features were rigid, and the hair bristled, now, in a hoarse whisper, intimated to his companion that the skeleton was standing at the casement beckoning him to follow. His companion, stretching across the piano, seized his hand, entreating him not to leave her until the apparition was gone. The young man allowed himself to be thus detained a prisoner for a few moments, until a renewal of the singular rattling sound again drew his attention to the ghastly spectre, when observing it to be so rapidly retreating as already nearly to have gained the cover of the adjacent forest of evergreens, he unclasped with gentle vio-

lence the slender fingers which strove to detain him, and with a tremendous bound sprang through the window.

Beatrice essayed to follow, but her dress catching in the claw of the piano, she was thrown to the ground. This accident only detained her a few seconds, yet when she reached the garden all was solitary and silent.

While listening for some sound to guide her future course, a shot followed by a piercing shriek reached her ear, coming from the direction of the great cedar. She hastened thither with what speed her strained ancle permitted, and on reaching the spot discovered Diana lying upon the ground bathed in blood. Leaning against the tree, in the deep shadow cast by its close dark foliage, was Harcourt. His eyes were fixed upon the prostrate girl with an expression of unutterable horror and despair, and his hand grasped a pistol from which a curling pale blue smoke showed that it had been recently discharged.

“Do not be alarmed,” said Diana, in a low weak voice, and with a ghastly smile, “I am not hurt, at least not much. The blood which you see is not mine. Say not a word of what you have witnessed to my Bill, for I wish the wedding to go on as if nothing had happened.”

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE WEDDING MORNING—AT THE CHURCH—
THE CEREMONY INTERRUPTED—THE CATAS-
TROPHE—RECALLED TO LIFE—DENOUE-
MENT.

A dense fog ushered in the wedding morning, depressing the spirits of those who were to take part in the coming ceremony, and throwing a gloom over all their preparations. When the hour drew near which was to mark the commencement of the new life, Diana passed into a state of high nervous excitement, bordering on hysterics. The warning of the apparition, "We meet again at the Church of St. Incense," came back to her mind, and she remembered, too, that this was a day which had hitherto always proved unlucky to her, never failing to be marked

by a chapter of accidents. Circumstances soon occurred to increase this state of apprehension, and seemingly to justify her belief in day-fatality: the orange blossoms fell from the wreath to the ground so soon as that part of the wedding paraphernalia was assumed, and while entering the carriage destined to convey her to the church, she tripped upon the step, and the nuptial veil, catching in the handle of the door, was torn from her head. In vain Beatrice pointed out that the first event was evidently the result of one of Hautville's wicked practical jokes, the stems of the flowers having been partly cut through with a knife; and the latter event was brought about by her own state of agitation: no reasoning could convince Diana that the inauspicious occurrences were other than omens prognosticating evil.

The bridal party reached the church without any further circumstances occurring worthy of note, and the ceremony proceeded without interruption until the clergyman came to that part of the ser-

vice in which he solemnly appeals to the bride and bridegroom to confess if either of them know any impediment why they may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony. A breathless silence reigned in the sacred building while the subjects of the appeal murmured a negative. The awful stillness which succeeded the response was broken by a rustle and suppressed exclamations: a woman arrayed in a faded bridal dress, had made her way to the communion rails, and taken up a position close to Annesley.

There were many persons present who recognised in that working-face—which not even the distortion produced by the fierce conflict of the passions within could deprive of its exquisite loveliness—the features of the celebrated Cleopatra Ptolemy; and there were many others who with amazement found themselves confronting one whom they had followed to the grave many years before.

“The Phantom,” cried Harcourt, and the cry was taken up and echoed by

several voices—"the phantom of Inez Mendoza."

"No phantom," said the female sadly, but the same Inez who in this very dress, in this veil, and with these withered orange flowers—emblems of the hopes which bloomed on that day to fade as quickly—swore to take you, William Annesley, to be my wedded husband until death should part us. Let that parting be now—since you love another, and *my* life only interferes with your happiness, it is time for me to die."

She drew a small poignard from her belt, and struck at the fair labouring bosom; but the blow was turned upward by another newcomer, who in the confusion had glided upon the scene unperceived; and the blade seemed to enter the neck, a torrent of blood following the stroke. The unfortunate woman sank back into the arms of Annesley, muttering, "William, you are free; William you are free, at last."

"Great God!" cried Mrs. Harcourt,

with eyes riveted upon the person of the female who had attempted to stay the arm of the suicide; "it is the form of my son's deceased wife—it is Bianca!" and overcome by a horrible suspicion, she added to the general confusion by fainting away.

The attention of the wedding party was now distracted by the appearance of a procession slowly advancing up the aisle. On a litter, borne by four men, was a human body, with glassy eyes, blanched skin, and collapsed features. In the pale working face of the invalid, Harcourt recognized the lineaments of Don Pedro, and in the bearers the persons of those who had first taught him to believe that his wife was a phantom. There was the cabman, whose extraordinary conduct first excited his suspicions, who ignored her presence, shut the door on her dress, and when reproved for his insolent conduct stared and insolently replied that there was no lady's dress to catch; there was the waiter who was always making as if he meant to walk

through her, and so obliging her to jump out of the way; there was Dr. Cambell, who solemnly pronounced her to be a phantom of the nature of those seen by Mons. Nicolai; there was the policeman, who corroborated the doctor and pretended not to be able to see her; and walking beside the litter were the landlady and female domestics of the deceitful establishment.

When Don Pedro reached the open space in front of the communion rails, he desired to be set down beside the inanimate body of Inez. There was a tear in his eye, and a quiver in his lip, as he noticed that the face was fast assuming that aspect which tells its own tale without aid from the stethoscope, which those who have never gazed on death recognize intuitively, and which once seen haunts the imagination for ever.

"Poor Inez," he muttered, "have I come too late to prevent the catastrophe? I divined your romantic intention, but I am ever too late when I purpose doing a

good action, although, thanks to the devil, I suppose, I am always in time when I attempt to work evil."

"Show me the wound," said Dr. Abernethy. "Ha! the carotid artery touched, the body drained of blood, the pulse gone, the heart silent, she has died of hemorrhage! But there is *yet* hope, we may bring her back to life by the *Libavian system of transfusion*. The human machine has received no irreparable injury, it is still perfect in all its principal parts, no important organ has been touched; therefore, we have but to repair the broken artery, refill the circulating system with blood, start the zoonic machine with a galvanic battery, and it will work as well as it did before. The average quantity of blood in a woman's body is twelve pounds. Will any persons present," he added, looking inquiringly round the circle, "volunteer to contribute from their veins the blood which is required to make up the quantity which this poor woman has lost. If twelve persons will volunteer to sub-

scribe one pound each, the quantity taken from the several circulating systems will be so small that no injury can result to the generous contributors."

Annesley, Harcourt, and Bianca came forward and expressed a wish to furnish what was required to restore Inez to life. A brief enthusiasm seized the circle, several persons advanced as if with the intention of becoming contributors, but the glitter of the lancet which the physician now produced seemed to appall many of them, the offer died on their lips, and they slunk back into their places in the circle.

The process of transfusion had not continued many minutes when the colour commenced to return to the lips of Inez. She opened her eyes, and murmured her husband's name.

"I am here beside you, dear wife," replied Annesley, "and if it can comfort you, know that with the blood drawn by your generous act of self-sacrifice has vanished, as suddenly as it arose, the fever of passion which I felt for Diana. All the old

feeling has returned. I live now for you alone—live you, dear one, for me.”

“Too late,” whispered Inez, shuddering and pushing him away.

“Not so: your wound is trifling. In a few days you will be restored to perfect health.”

“Alas, even if that were so, the same fear which has separated us for so many years must separate us still. Death still follows me wherever I go, cutting down every one whom I care for. I dare not live with you lest you too should fall a victim to the fatal and mysterious influence which slays every thing which I love.”

“Fear not,” said Don Pedro, “for in half an hour I will cease to exist, and with *my* life will expire the subtle influence which killed your friends, and so rendered your life miserable.”

The wretched man then went on to make a full confession. It appeared that he had been anxious to make Inez his wife, partly because he loved her, and

partly because he wished to secure her very large fortune. The girl, however, would not listen to his suit, and he then resolved to remove every person that she cared for, thinking that if her affections had no other object they must centre in him. To effect his purpose, he employed one of the subtlest poisons known to toxicologists, the *Cyanide of Cacodyl*. This preparation is so deadly that a single drop diffused through the atmosphere of even a large room—the fluid is very volatile—will destroy every person coming within the influence of the contaminated air ; and an article of inner clothing upon which the tenth part of a drop had been placed would be as fatal as the shirt of Dejanira. A sweet-scented flower would not be less fragrant if the twentieth part of a drop were placed among its petals, but the blossom would have acquired all the deadly properties of the Upas. In a short time Pedro discovered with amazement and awe, that some spirit as deadly as his own, seemed to enter the lists with him,

as if emulous of his desire to isolate Inez, and anxious to contest which should strew her path with the most victims. This mysterious competitor soon proved itself to be infinitely his superior in the art of destruction, cutting down ten victims to the other's one, and at last striking Pedro himself, and bringing him to the point of death. The wretch would doubtless have died, if Doctor Abernethy, who had been attracted to Homburg by the extraordinary reports regarding Inez, had not sought him out and explained the mystery of the fatality, showing it to have its origin in the deadly reputation which Inez had acquired. With a significance which seemed to imply some suspicion, the learned physician remarked, "A fixed belief that death is at hand is a poison as potent as the *Cyanide of Cacodyl*; so that such persons as are unfortunate enough to acquire a reputation of being followed by death wherever they go, do really by their presence spread disease and death among the credulous and superstitious; just as a perfectly healthy

person if he be reputed to have the plague will disseminate that malignant disorder wherever he goes, as surely as if he were really labouring under it. An infected fancy is as fertile a source of disease as an infected body: a moral poison as fatal as a physical one. An *expectation* of being seized with certain symptoms is a *nidus* which only requires *concentrated attention* to be developed into the actual disorder. How many have died of the witchcraft of fancy the moral epidemics of the middle ages bear witness; and in modern times the magic of imagination proves not less fatal—it is possible that nine-tenths of those who were carried off by the last visit of cholera perished under the spell of the moral poison emanating from the knowledge of its presence! Faith is the doctor's worst enemy; but then, on the other hand, it is his best friend; against those killed by the imagination we may set off those saved by the imagination—cured through such influences as homœopathic globules, magnetic pawings and strok-

ings, galvanic chains, metallic tractors, the absurd manipulations of medicine men of the barbarous countries, in a word medical charlatanry or quackery of all nations. Hence every medical charlatan, so long as he confines himself to acting on the imagination of his dupes, discarding drugs altogether, is a public benefactor, and if by any means he can succeed in acquiring such a reputation as Greatrakes, disease will fly from before his touch, and even the crooking of his little finger will produce instant alleviation of all the worst symptoms.

It was this conversation that suggested to Pedro the idea of becoming a medical charlatan.

Upon his recovery, Pedro devoted himself with great ardour to the study of the phenomena of Expectant Attention, with the view to invoke the magic of imagination to aid his various schemes for obtaining money. The remembrance of the compact entered into by Laura Peyton and Bianca in the Capuchin Cemetery at

Palermo, suggested several schemes in which the making of each receive a prediction from a figure representing the spirit of the other was a prominent feature. Laura's life was insured in favour of Pedro for a large sum, and shortly after the unfortunate girl was awakened at midnight to find a form in the similitude of Bianca sitting on her bed, to be assured by the pretended spectre that it was the ghost of her friend who had died at such an hour, on such a day, and was come for the purpose of warning her to prepare herself, for that she would die at a certain time stated. The effect of this communication was that Laura did die at the hour appointed. Mean time, another plan of Pedro's was in course of execution. Bianca under the spell of a prediction was condemned to fall in love with Harcourt, and subsequently to fall into a trance so deep as to simulate death. By these events Pedro calculated, first, on obtaining the amount of a policy of insurance on his sister's life; secondly, on making use of her influence

in obtaining possession of her husband's fortune. To insure the reciprocation of her passion, it was arranged that the proposed object should receive a visit from a pseudo phantom in the similitude of his deceased grandfather, which presenting a portrait of Miss Mendoza, was to address him thus:—
“My son, I have been permitted to return from the other world for the purpose of informing you that the original of this image will shortly cross your path, and that you will love and marry her. Such is your destiny, and I see not how it may be avoided. Yet I would urge you to earnestly struggle with the feelings of tenderness which her exquisite grace, wit, and beauty will be certain to inspire in your too susceptible heart, for the most lamentable consequences will result from the union.

“My son, keep this prediction constantly in your mind: morning, noon, and night. Continually repeat ‘I will *not* love her; I am a free agent, and I will *never* marry her.’ Perchance by these means—although

I have but little hope that such will be the case—you may postpone the evil day for a short time. But, alas! it can be but for a very brief period, for you are destined to love and marry her within six months, and the decrees of fate are immutable.”

When Bianca recovered from the trance she found herself in a strange house. Don Pedro was leaning over her, apparently in the act of applying the poles of a galvanic battery. He confessed that he had taken up the policy upon her life, that he could not refund it, and threatened that if she revealed her existence he would accuse her of being an accomplice in the fraud, and bring forward in support of his statement evidence so strong that even her own husband would not believe in her innocence. But, he added, although it was imperatively necessary that Mr. Harcourt should continue to believe his wife to be dead, it was far from his, Pedro's, intention to inflict upon the amiable young man the pains of separation from the woman he loved. Mr. Harcourt was of a nature unsuspecting

and credulous, and if Bianca brought him to reside with her it would be a matter of no difficulty to persuade him that she was nothing more than a sensorial illusion, a phantom of the nature of those seen by Mons. Nicolai.

So soon as Pedro had carried out his scheme regarding Bianca, he commenced the execution of his plan for causing Inez to withdraw from her husband with such circumstances as would leave the latter under the impression that she was dead. Persuaded that her husband was succumbing to a belief in her fatal influence, and that nothing but an impression that she was dead could save his life, Inez allowed to be presented to him as hers the body of a female obtained from one of the hospitals. It was charred beyond recognition to prevent the detection of the cheat; and to account for the phenomenon it was suggested that death had resulted from spontaneous combustion.

She then retired to a mansion on the banks of the Thames, and here it was that

the famous scheme for banishing Decay from Nature was suggested. The world was to be made an Eden like that in which our first parents wandered before the fall. In this Utopia all were to be young and all lovely, the flowers never withering, and the birds ever singing. Pedro admitted that the cost of bringing about this enchanting transformation would be very great; but in what more noble manner could riches be expended? As she had hitherto kept from the knowledge of her husband the fact that her wealth was great—very justly fearing that it would be impossible to discriminate the pure offerings of genuine affection from the worship tendered to Mammon—it would be prudent still to receive the sole control of the property, so that there might be no lack of funds for restoring to mankind its pristine immortality. When the element of Decay was banished from the earth, when the human form etherealized, immortalized, beautiful for ever, roved through gardens smiling with a never-fading bloom, and an

undying verdure, the necessity for her separation from her husband would cease to exist, and fearless of the Azrael which now dogged her steps, she might again take him to her arms, and in these enchanting regions of eternal spring live with him for ever and ever.

Fully believing in the possibility of realizing this glorious vision, Inez was content to be separated from Annesley until such time as Pedro's experiments on the element of Decay of Nature should be brought to a successful conclusion, but the fear that in the mean time some unkind fate might prematurely snatch him from the world, induced her to follow him about like a shadow, to watch over his safety.

During all this time, without the knowledge of the High Priestess, Pedro was turning the Temple of Youth and Beauty to his own purposes, tampering with the votaries, compelling them to give him large sums of money, and other favours, and then, to prevent detection, placing them under the spell of a prediction, or causing them to be haunted to death, and



there is too much reason to fear, sometimes calling in the aid of drugs to secure the fulfilment of the spectral vaticination or prognostic. To conceal his nefarious practices he wrote letters to the various periodicals with a view to make the public believe that a great phantom-seeing epidemic was raging in London. The result was that the panic caused by the news so infected the imagination of the nervous and impressible, that many persons were seized by genuine sensorial illusion, and were haunted to death by these creations of a morbid fancy. These cases of true spectral deception probably contributed not a little to prevent the detection of the pseudo-phantoms. It is difficult therefore to estimate correctly the number of Pedro's victims, but it must have been very large.

The wound which terminated the career of this arch-murderer was received in the following manner :—Pedro had forged his brother-in-law's name for a very large amount; the acceptances were nearly due and discovery imminent. He resolved,

therefore, to poison him with the cyanide of cacodyl, but in such a manner that the death would be attributed to the prevailing phantom-seeing epidemic; and with this intention, upon several occasions, wrapped in grave clothes over which a naked skull was visible, presented himself before the object of his insidious designs. Beatrice having won his admiration, he had marked her out for a future victim, and this probably induced him to select the eve of the tripple wedding as that on which to bring about the death of her *fiancé*. The scene selected for the tragedy was the great cedar in the lawn at Beauclerc Villa. Diana was trained thither, partly with a view to effect her ruin, and partly with a design of so mixing her up with the end of Harcourt as to throw suspicion on her, should any arise. But Nemesis was abroad that night. Harcourt, seeing the phantom vanish in the shadow of the Great Cedar, fired in that direction, and the ball, true to its mark, passed through the body of the wretch, inflicting a mortal

wound. The blood spouted on Diana, who was already at the trysting place, and with a wild shriek of terror she started into the moonlight, her white dress crimson and dropping gore. Upon seeing her thus her cousin was seized with the horrible idea that it was really the poor girl whom he had been chasing all the time, transformed by a disordered imagination into a ghastly image of sheeted death.

Opinion is divided as to the manner in which Pedro produced in his victims impressions of spectral illusion.

Some hold that the sulphate of lime symptom might be explained on the supposition that when he wished to present to any persons figures in their own semblance, he administered a powerful narcotic, and while they slept, took a plaster cast of the face, from which a wax mask was subsequently made. This theory would account for the remarkable immobility of the features of some of the phantoms suspected to be pseudo.

Others assert that the phantoms were real, and conjured up in the following

ingenious manner:—About bed hour Pedro related to the proposed victim the terrible story of the death of Lady Beresford, and subsequently seasoned the good night cup with that potent phantasmatic, Indian Hemp, which, it is well known, has the singular property of causing the phantoms of thought to put on the semblance of life. That out of such a combination a spectre would be likely to arise, physiologists all admit. Doctor Abernethy, in reference to this matter has observed:—“A ghost story going to bed, in conjunction with a potion of *Canabis Indica*, where the subject is nervous and superstitious, would be likely to result in an analogous phantom with analogous circumstances, the spectral visitor speaking and acting as the spectre in the story, and the unfortunate subject of the illusion drawing his words and actions from the same source. In the cheerful day time this receipt for producing a phantom may fail; but at the dark, silent, solitary hour of midnight it must prove infallible; the solemn striking of the clock will act like a con-

juror's wand, and out of the fear of a supernatural visitation will arise the very image dreaded; the awful self-similitude, or double if the story told have been that of Diana Rich, or the apparition of a deceased friend, if it be that of the Marquis de Precy.

It is also a matter of dispute among physiologists how Pedro secured the appearance of luminosity in the face and breath of the victim when the time of predicted death arrived. Some hold that the phenomenon was produced by the injection of phosphoric oil into the crural vein; while others believe the phosphorescence to have been directly and solely due to the strong expectation and watching in the patient for that peculiar development.

By the daily injection of young blood into her veins, Diana was completely re-juvenated, and in less than three months returned home blooming with all the fresh beauty of the morning of life. Under the renewed homage offered to her budding charms, her ambition revived, and being

invited by Lady Lancaster York to spend the season in London, went thither to taste the sweets of renewed beauty. The joys of that season what pen could describe! The rapture of feeling once more armed with the majesty of loveliness, and the magic spells of youth! The ineffable ecstasy springing from the consciousness of again possessing all the privileges of that happy period of which Hebe is the personification! But often at a ball the horrid thought would suggest itself, that these triumphs might not be real, that the murmurings of her admirers might be but "the soft sweet music of a dream," and that the whole gorgeous scene, the room with its thousands of scintillating lights, its gay music, and brilliant dresses, and whispering lovers, and revolving waltzers, might presently vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaving but a wreck behind—a declining belle mourning over her fading beauty. What if her lovers proved themselves to be as unsubstantial as the equipage furnished to

Cinderella by the old lady with the crutch, and at the first crow of the cock they melted into air "like fairy gifts fading away," leaving her a sleeper awakened to all the terrors of approaching age. Dreams were often as vivid, often as seemingly real. In time, however, this singular and distressing feeling wore away, and she became satisfied of being really awake, and, by a miracle of modern science, Restored to Youth.

END OF BEAUTIFUL FOR EVER.

NOTES.

TRANSFUSION OF BLOOD.

Two hundred and fifteen years ago, Andreas Libavius, professor of medicine in the University of Halle, a man of much talent and learning, suggested that life might be prolonged, and disease removed by introducing blood taken from the young and healthy into the veins of the old and infirm. This theory attracted much attention, and experiments were made upon the lower animals. The results obtained created a great sensation; philosophers began to believe that their wildest dreams were upon the point of realization, that the true elixir of life had been discovered, and that death would cease to be the common and inevitable lot of humanity. Under the influence of transfusion aged and decrepit animals became more lively, and seemed to move with greater facility, and the dying received a new lease of life. Nor was the system less successful with human beings; the most extraordinary cures were performed by its means, the aged bloomed with a second youth, and persons of weak vitality became vigorous and full of life and spirits. Celebrated men now applied their whole energies to developing this artificial mode of repairing and renovating the worn-out human machine; Lower in England, Dennis in France, Monly, Hoffman, and

others in Germany, and transfusion became the fashion, being applied as a remedy in every disease, as well as in cases of the decay of the whole organism from old age. As human blood could not be obtained in sufficient quantity to meet the increased demand, blood drawn from lambs and calves was substituted, and, as might be expected, numbers of operations were attended with fatalities, and still greater numbers were unsuccessful. Transfusion then fell into disrepute, and several of the governments of Europe — urged probably by the medical faculty, who were naturally jealous of a system which threatened to enable patients to dispense with their aid and “throw physic to the dogs” — forbade its use within their dominions.

Great light has lately been thrown on many obscure subjects indirectly connected with the transfusion of blood as a means of renovating life and removing disease, and thereby many objections to its employment have been removed, and the causes revealed of the fatality which so often attended its exhibition in the days when it was in vogue.

HEMP.

Mons. Moreau, a French writer, who has witnessed the phenomena of hemp-eating in the East, and tried its effects upon himself, thus speaks of his experience: “It is *real happiness* which is produced by the haschish; for the haschish eater is happy, not like the gourmand,

or famished man while satisfying his appetite, but like one who hears tidings which fill him with joy. We become the sport of impressions of every kind. The course of our ideas may be broken by the slightest cause. We are turned, so to speak, by every wind. By a word or a gesture, our thoughts may be successively directed to a multitude of different subjects with a rapidity and lucidity which are truly marvellous. The mind becomes possessed with a feeling of pride, corresponding to the exaltation of its faculties, which it is conscious have increased in energy and power. The slightest impulse carries it along. Hence those who make use of the haschish in the East, when they wish to give themselves up to the intoxication of the fantasia, withdraw themselves carefully from everything which could give to their delirium a tendency to melancholy, or excite any but feelings of pleasurable enjoyment."

This is the description of a man who speaks from experience—of a professed hemp-eater. While under the influence of the drug the patient becomes incapable of calculating time ; seconds seem hours, and hours are prolonged into an eternity. The senses become no longer correct guides to external impressions, the most extraordinary errors of perception are the result. Everything seems magnified, every idea is exaggerated. While Monsieur Moreau under the influence of haschish was traversing a passage of the opera, the corridor seemed interminable, its extremity receding as he advanced. Although he could not have been many minutes passing through it, the time seemed many hours.

As an example of the manner in which every feeling is exaggerated during the fantasia, the following account is interesting. It is the personal experience of the celebrated Theodore Gaultier, confided by him to Doctor Moreau : —

“My sense of hearing was prodigiously developed.
* * * * A glass overthrown, the creaking of a footstool, a word pronounced low, vibrated and shook me like peals of thunder ; my own voice appeared to me so loud that I dare not speak for fear of shattering the walls around me, or of making me burst like an explosive shell ; more than five hundred clocks sang out the hour with a harmonious silvery sound ; every sonorous object sounded like the note of a Harmonica or the *Æolian* harp ; I swam or floated in an ocean of sound.” Bayard Taylor thus describes the effect of hemp upon himself :—

“The sense of limitation of the confinement of our senses within the bounds of our own flesh and blood— instantly fell away. The walls of my frame were burst outward, and instantly tumbled into ruin ; and without thinking what form I wore—losing sight even of all idea of form—I felt that I existed through a vast extent of space. * * * * It is difficult to describe this sensation, or the rapidity with which it mastered me, the state of mental exultation in which I was then plunged, all sensations as they rose presented more or less coherent images. They presented themselves to me in a double form, one physical, and therefore to a certain extent tangible ; the other spiritual, and there-

fore revealing itself in a set of splendid metaphors.

* * * * My curiosity now was in a way of being satisfied: the spirit (demon, shall I not rather say) of haschish had entire possession of me. The thrills which ran through my nervous system became more rapid and fierce, accompanied by sensations which steeped my whole being in unutterable rapture. I was compassed by a sea of light through which played the pure harmonious colours that are born of light. While endeavouring in broken expressions to describe my feelings to my friends, who sat looking upon me incredulously—not yet having been affected by the drug—I suddenly found myself at the foot of the great pyramid of Cheops. The tapering courses of yellow limestone gleamed like gold in the sun, and the pile rose so high that it seemed to lean for support on the blue arch of the sky. I wished to ascend it, and the wish alone placed me on its apex, lifted thousands of feet above the wheat fields and palm groves of Egypt. I cast my eyes downwards, and, to my astonishment, saw that it was built, not of limestone, but of huge square plugs of cavendish tobacco. * * * * The most remarkable feature of these delusions was, that at the time I was most completely under their influence, I knew myself to be seated in the tower of Antoneo's hotel in Damascus, knew, that I had taken haschish, and that the strange, gorgeous, ludicrous fancies which possessed me were the effect of it.”—*Pictures of Palestine by Bayard Taylor*, 1855.

“ A singular form of insanity is sometimes occasioned

by the incautious use of hemp, and which is as singular as the delirium tremens brought on by the prolonged abuse of spirituous liquors. It is at once recognised by the strange balancing gait of the patient, a constant rubbing of the hands, perpetual giggling, and a propensity to caress and chafe the feet of all bystanders of whatever rank. The eye wears an expression of cunning and merriment which cannot be mistaken. In a few cases the patients are violent; in all that we have seen voraciously hungry; there is no increased heat or frequency of circulation, nor any appearance of inflammation and congestion, and the skin and general functions are in a natural state."—*Pareira's Materia Medica*.

If a sufficiently large dose of hemp be taken the patient will pass from catalepsy into that state of apparent death into which Shakespeare's Juliet was thrown by the phial of the friar.

" Presently through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humour, which shall seize
Each vital spirit; for no pulse shall keep
His natural progress, but surcease to beat;
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
To paly ashes; thy eyes' windows fall,
Like death when he shuts up the day of life:
Each part deprived of supple government,
Shall stiff, and stark, and cold, appear like death:
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt remain for two and forty hours,
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep."



